

SCRUTINY

A Quarterly Review

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SCRUTINY

A Quarterly Review

Edited by

D W HARDING

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L C KNIGHTS

W H MELLERS

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LES CHEMINS DE LA LIBERTÉ¹

⁶IT is proof of no untoward pessimism to suppose that the English reader may, if he has not already, soon have abundant cause to feel a like irritation as soon as the fashion-purveyors get to work on Existentialism'

The fashionable craze has now lasted two years in France and M Sartre himself has recently confirmed the account given in *Scrutiny*, Vol xiii, No 2 'Qu'est-ce qu'on appelle existentialisme?' La plupart des gens qui utilisent ce mot seraient bien embarrassés pour le justifier, puisqu'aujourd'hui que c'est devenu une mode, on déclare volontiers qu'un musicien ou qu'un peintre est existentialiste Un échetier de *Clartés* signe l'*Existentialiste*, et au fond le mot a pris aujourd'hui une telle largeur et une telle extension qu'il ne signifie plus rien du tout Il semble que, faute de doctrine d'avant-garde analogue au surréalisme, les gens avides de scandale et de mouvement s'adressent à cette philosophie, qui ne peut d'ailleurs rien leur apporter dans ce domaine, en réalité c'est la doctrine la moins scandaleuse, la plus austère, elle est strictement destinée aux techniciens et aux philosophes' ² *L'être et le néant* is by all accounts a long and difficult work its rôle in the fashionable world seems analogous to that played by *Das Kapital* when Marxism was a literary fashion And, to extend the parallel a little further, M Sartre may be said to have published his *Manifest* in the book from which I have just quoted He recently saw fit to tour Switzerland with a lecture expounding his central doctrines in popular form And now that translations are available in the U S A and in England, we shall soon be in a position to judge whether the fashion is going to sweep the English-speaking world with the same *furor* it has excited in the French-speaking world

The works of M Sartre would therefore seem to call for a sociological as well as a philosophical examination ³ Not being in a position to undertake either of these tasks, I am constrained to stand by the position taken up in the article referred to Indeed,

¹*L'âge de raison*, by Jean-Paul Sartre, Gallimard, Paris, 125 frs
Le Sursis, by Jean-Paul Sartre, Gallimard, Paris, 130 frs

Huis Clos, by Jean-Paul Sartre, *Horizon*, London, 12/6

²*L'Existentialisme est un Humanisme*, by J -P Sartre, Les Editions Nagel, Paris

³The reader may care to refer to two articles by Mr A J Ayer published in *Horizon*, Vol xii, Nos 67 and 68 In his concluding paragraph he says, 'These analyses of human behaviour seem to be of considerable psychological interest, but, to my mind, they are open to the serious objection that they do not correspond empirically to the way that most people actually behave'

further reflection and the opportunity to examine the more recent publications have only confirmed the propriety of the approach made there, which was that M. Sartre's literary works must be criticized in literary terms, the 'philosophical' matter must be weighed and evaluated on its own merits as a functional part of a literary whole, the critic's task is to examine the author's standards as exhibited in the novel or play and not to imitate current practice, which consists in picking out the philosophical ideas and relating them to the expositions given in the philosophical works.

In a sense, however, the critic might be thought to be passing a philosophical verdict similar to the one given by Mr. Ayer. If it is true that the existentialist position is based on psychology, on the claim that every man has certain thoughts and feelings hitherto ignored or unrecognized for what they really were, then the difficulty experienced by the critic may be simply that the presentation of these *données* strikes him as unconvincing because he does not recognize them as elements of common experience. Thus, in criticizing *Les Mouches*, I pronounced the crisis a ludicrous pantomime, since such behaviour—the way the dawning of the consciousness of liberty was there presented—struck me as an arbitrary philosophical paradigm. I experience the same difficulty with the works under review, in which M. Sartre further explores the nature of human existence and in particular the notion of liberty and *l'acte libre*.

The problem is similar to the one the reader of *Four Quartets* has to face. The novel concepts are rendered credible by the context, they function as poetry. Mr. Eliot's views (or supposed views) are not there as something to be singled out from the poem and commented on. It is a positive disadvantage to approach the poems with the expectation that they will confirm orthodox beliefs. Just so, sympathy with or hostility towards M. Sartre's central tenets can easily distract the critic.

In this review I propose to discuss the way the notion of liberty crops up in the novels, not because it is one of the central notions of the existentialist philosophy, of which I know next to nothing, but because it seems to me to be the axis on which the novels turn (*L'âge de raison* and *Le Sursis* are the first two novels of a trilogy entitled *Les Chemins de la Liberté*). The criticism I wish to justify is not that the idea of liberty could not be credibly presented in a philosophical treatise, but that in these novels it nowhere arises inevitably from the context and so appears credible, that, on the contrary, it is imposed from outside. So that even the existentialist who is convinced of the internal coherence of the system should feel unhappy about the internal coherence of the novels.

In *L'âge de raison* we find that M. Sartre has dropped one of the more unsatisfactory features of *Les Mouches*, the hocus pocus with the gods, and has placed the scene in contemporary Paris (June, 1938) instead of in the mythical past. He has, however, retained the atmosphere of Argos, the sweltering summer day, the

climate (for M. Sartre) of sudden disaster, of far reaching despair, of rottenness. The rottenness extends to man as well as to nature. The Orestes of the novel is Mathieu Delarue, a teacher of philosophy in a Parisian lycée, who comes to see that 'il y avait quelque chose de pourri dans sa vie, dans cet été'.

Mathieu's crisis—the main theme of the book—has a mundane aspect which it may be as well to dispose of at once. It is the crisis of a man in the middle thirties who, disliking the thought of growing up and assuming the responsibilities of maturity, is forced by circumstances to recognize that he is no longer young. *L'âge de raison* ends with Mathieu's reflection 'il avait fini sa journée, il en avait fini avec sa jeunesse. c'est vrai, c'est tout de même vrai j'ai l'âge de raison'. Secondly, according to M. Sartre, 'entre trente et quarante ans, les gens jouent leur dernière chance'. As *La Dernière Chance* is the title of the last novel of the trilogy, we may suppose that the decisions taken or refused by Mathieu during this crisis will determine his fate finally.

At the same time Mathieu thinks of himself and is thought of by his friends as a man with a passion for liberty (*être libre c'était ce qui lui tenait le plus à cœur*). Mathieu indeed claims that there is nothing peculiar in experiencing this feeling, other people have it, too, 'seulement ils ne s'en rendent pas compte'. The notion, it seems, did not arise as a result of reading Heidegger, but, in a primitive form, was present at the dawn of conscious self-reflection. At the age of seven, he says, 'il crouissait dans une chaleur provinciale qui sentait la mouche' and accomplished his first *acte libre* by smashing an old Chinese jar. 'Il avait pensé "C'est moi qui ait fait ça!" et il s'était senti tout fier, libéré du monde et sans attaches, sans famille, sans origines, un petit surgissement tête qui avait crevé la croûte terrestre'. Once when he was sixteen 'il avait l'impression d'être une petite explosion en suspens dans les airs, ronde, abrupte, inexplicable. Il s'était dit "Je serai libre", ou plutôt il ne s'était rien dit du tout, mais c'était ce qu'il voulait dire et c'était un pari, il avait parié que sa vie entière ressemblerait à ce moment exceptionnel'. He repeated this *pari* at intervals later. 'Il n'était rien d'autre que ce pari'.

On looking back at the age of thirty-four, the only result of this vision had been the resolve to remain honest with himself, to examine his motives scrupulously and to refuse the appeal of all beliefs and causes which could not claim his entire loyalty. 'Son unique soin avait été de se garder disponible. Pour un acte. Un acte libre et réfléchi qui engagerait toute sa vie et qui serait au commencement d'une existence nouvelle'. In the past various temptations had presented themselves. 'Il avait songé à partir pour la Russie, à laisser tomber ses études, à apprendre un métier manuel. Mais ce qui l'avait retenu, chaque fois, au bord de ces ruptures violentes, c'est qu'il manquait de *raisons* pour le faire'. So that when the novel opens Mathieu finds himself in the position of one of Henry James' heroes: he doubts whether anything will ever happen. (*A présent je n'attends plus rien*)

The point is rather crudely rammed home by an incident which appears to have been inserted *ad hoc*. Mathieu had long ago decided that Communism was incompatible with true liberty. However, when his best friend invites him to join the Party, the refusal costs him a pang. 'Tu es libre', says the Communist, 'mais à quoi ça sert-il, la liberté, si ce n'est pas pour s'engager?' Tu as mis trente-cinq ans à te nettoyer et le résultat c'est du vide' Mathieu regards the Communist as 'real' and 'a man', yet he cannot find in himself 'assez de raisons pour ça'. 'Ma liberté? Elle me pèse. Voilà des années que je suis libre pour rien. Je crève d'envie de la troquer un bon coup contre une certitude. Je ne demanderais pas mieux que de travailler avec vous, ça me changerait de moi-même, j'ai besoin de m'oublier un peu. Et puis je pense comme toi qu'on n'est pas un homme tant qu'on n'a pas trouvé quelque chose pour quoi on accepterait de mourir'. His refusal heightens his feelings of self-disgust and he decides 'je suis un type foutu'. Later this feeling crystallizes in a sort of vision: 'toutes ses pensées étaient contaminées dès leur naissance. Soudain, Mathieu s'ouvrit mollement comme une blessure, il se vit tout entier, béant. Pensée, pensée sur des pensées, pensées sur des pensées de pensées, il était transparent jusqu'à l'infini et pourri jusqu'à l'infini'.

Mathieu is faced with a similar decision in his private life. He has had a seven years' liaison with a woman, whom, by the time the novel opens, he has ceased to love. She discovers that she is pregnant and wishes to have a child. Mathieu assumes without questioning her that she prefers an abortion and a great deal of the 'business' of the novel is taken up with attempts to raise the money to pay for the operation. When Mathieu eventually discovers that his mistress wants the child, he feels obliged to marry her and to settle down to married life. But *la liberté* apparently orders him to remain outside the ordinary round of social obligations. 'Et soudain il lui sembla qu'il voyait sa liberté. Elle était hors d'attente, cruelle, jeune et capricieuse comme la grâce. Elle lui commandait tout uniquement de plaquer Marcelle. Ce ne fut qu'un instant, cette inexplicable liberté, qui prenait les apparences du crime, il ne fit que l'entrevoir. Elle lui faisait peur et puis elle était si loin'. This, however, turns out not to be the final truth. He sees later that he is not a mere automaton. His liberty consists in making a responsible decision. 'Il pourrait faire ce qu'il voulait, personne n'avait le droit de le conseiller, il n'y aurait pour lui de Bien ni de Mal que s'il les inventait'. From this responsibility there is no escape. But when he finally decides not to marry Marcelle, he does not feel that he has achieved his liberty. 'Moi, tout ce que je fais, je le fais *pour rien*, on dirait qu'on me vole les suites de mes actes, tout se passe comme si je pouvais toujours reprendre mes coups. Je ne sais pas ce que je donnerais pour faire un acte irrémédiable'.

A number of characters in the novel seem to have been introduced to illustrate the theme of growing old. This is particularly

true of a couple of young Russian *émigrés* who are afraid of growing up ('ils ont peur. Peur de la mort, de la maladie, de la vieillesse') Unfortunately for the reader, Mathieu and, apparently, the author find these 'martyrs de la jeunesse' 'fascinants tout de même' Mathieu is in love with the girl, Ivich, without knowing it, until an *acte libre* occurs in a taxi 'Une seconde encore il lui sembla qu'il resta en suspens dans le vide avec une intolérable impression de liberté et puis, brusquement, il étendit le bras, pris Ivich par les épaules et l'attira contre lui' A similar moment occurs when Ivich gets drunk in a night club and splits her hand open with a knife to shock a woman at a neighbouring table Mathieu jabs the knife into his own palm and they have to get their hands bandaged up by an attendant, but not before the lovers have clasped their bleeding palms This extravagance is the immediate consequence of an experience of liberty

'Elle sourit et dit d'un air d'extase

—Ca brille comme un petit diamant

—Qu'est-ce qui brille comme un petit diamant

—Ce moment-ci Il est tout rond, il est suspendu dans le vide comme un petit diamant, je suis éternelle'⁴

This is, I believe, a fair selection comprehending most of what M Sartre says about liberty in this novel It is also fair in a way in which, as it were, it ought *not* to be That is, these extracts lose practically nothing by being taken from their contexts, because they were never really embedded in those contexts Consequently their credibility rests on their face value which, I submit, is not high But even if it were as high as one could wish, the objection still remains that the novel is engineered to 'place' these remarks M Sartre does not seem to have been primarily interested in writing a novel (He occasionally allows the plot to degenerate into farce)

Thus we are led to make a twofold criticism the author knew too well what he was doing and at the same time was uncertain of his purpose For M Sartre seems to have been unable to make up his mind about his principle characters To say this is not to demand that they should be presented in sharper tones of black or white, but that a coherent attitude on the part of the author should underlie and hold together the various ways in which the characters are presented

Mr Turnell recently described the work of M Sartre as 'largely a clinical study' In a sense, this is true The persons moving in Mathieu's circle are shown in an unflattering light, one that shows up all blemishes, but not in an *impartial* light The critical point is to determine whether in choosing the particular

⁴A curious parallel to this scene may be found on page 293 of *L'Invitée*, by Simone de Beauvoir, Paris, 1943 A similarly perverse young girl with whom the hero is on similar terms burns a hole in her palm with a cigarette while watching a dance in a similar night club

focus with its strong highlights on what is nauseating (Marcelle's vomit, etc.), M. Sartre persuades us that the positives are, as it were, negatively present, whether there is a tension so created, a liberation of energy.

M. Sartre has protested that 'L'existentialisme n'est pas une delectation morose'. Yet when we force ourselves to review the disgusting details so lovingly exposed, we discover, not that some *moral* depravity is being laid bare, nor yet that the author is enjoying himself in the free delight expressed by 'wallowing', but rather that he is punishing himself by sternly thrusting his own nose into what he finds unbearably nauseating. As a result, there is a kind of sombre energy at work. The scenes, for example, where Daniel, a homosexual who is in revolt against his own perversion, tries to punish himself, vibrate, are 'there' in a way little else in the novel is. Yet one is brought up with a shock when Daniel's state of mind is compared to hell ('C'était comme ça qu'il imaginait l'enfer: un regard qui percerait tout, on verrait jusqu'au bout du monde—jusqu'au fond de soi').

M. Sartre carries this idea further in his one-act play, *Huis Clos*, where he exploits to the full a notion that runs through the novel, namely, that you can only suffer through the thought that others are condemning you ('L'enfer, c'est les Autres'). In this limited sense, Existentialism can claim to be a kind of humanism, for it makes man the judge and executioner of man. The characters seem to suffer just as much whether they are condemned justly or unjustly. The question as to what is just condemnation is not raised. Conversely, they seem to be comforted by unjustified approval.

The uncertainty left by these considerations is deepened when we turn to the hero Mathieu, and inquire what is intended by the word *pourri* which he so frequently applies. For here it seems that the uncertainty lies in the first place in the author's conception. On the one hand, Mathieu is represented as an intellectual, a man who is too aware of himself. Yet he displays remarkable obtuseness in his dealings with other people and in his judgments about his own feelings.

A critic in the *New Statesman* (I think) felt that in this apparently representative picture of the preoccupations of a Parisian intellectual, actual preoccupation with things of the mind had been arbitrarily left out. Certainly Mathieu is a philosopher only in term time.

His philosophy is never brought to bear on his personal problems. One wonders: had he never heard of Heidegger? And if so, should not his experiences have affected him as a striking confirmation of the main arguments of the existentialist school?

The difficulty seems to be that M. Sartre has chosen to be 'objective' about someone in a position we may suppose very similar in important respects to his own. In his anxiety not to give himself, as it were, a too flattering part he has tended to humiliate the character at every turn and in so doing has finally

presented us with a man whose scope is very much narrower than his own (Whereas part of the feeling of exhilaration given by a *La Nausée* came from the impression that the hero was intellectually on a level with the author's own best self)

If the feeling of self-loathing does not arise from excessive cerebration, we must seek elsewhere. The feeling seems to be a more primitive, immediate reaction. Self-loathing amounting to a loathing of life itself does cover a great deal in the book. In making this judgment neither praise nor condemnation is involved. Feelings of self-disgust may be used to create successful art. If we compare, say, the attitude of the hero in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and that of the 'I' in Hopkins' sonnets, we recognize something like an obsession sentimentally indulged on the one hand and a tense equipose on the other. I should place M. Sartre towards the *Hamlet* end of this rough-and-ready scale—dangerously near the region of Faulkner and Céline.

The search for a 'statement of positives' which would give backbone to the novel has left us only with the decent refusal to present the intellectual's shortcomings in an indulgent light. There remains a kind of positive which exercises a damning qualification of the degree of seriousness we may attribute to the self-criticism. I refer to the sentimentality and equivocal nature of the author's approach to the young girl, Ivich. Not only does the philosopher in his depressed state treat her with abject deference—the author here has limited the range of Mathieu's irony to occasional flashes—but M. Sartre himself uses words like 'noble' and 'tragique' to describe a woman whom at times he seems to have 'placed' in his own mind as essentially petty, if not perverse. This streak of sentimentality, which also marred *La Nausée*, is not, as far as I am aware, forced on the author by his philosophical system. It is the complement of the austerity, which thus appears not as clinical astringency but as the disillusion arising from failure to achieve a belief in the possibility of spiritual health.

M. Sartre might well have entitled the second volume of his trilogy *La Condition Humaine*, if M. Malraux had not already used the title. The scene of *L'âge de raison* had been almost exclusively Parisian, and confined to a section of Paris. *Le Sursis* embraces the whole of France and parts of Europe. The handful of characters of the first part are almost lost on the crowded canvas presented in the second. Yet, as I hope to show, the essence of the sequel is the further evolution of the notion of liberty in the mind of the hero, Mathieu, under the impact of public events. For *Le Sursis* covers the last week of September, 1938, days of false alarms and phoney peace.

After the break with Marcelle, who is married off very conveniently to Daniel, Mathieu is free to pursue his troubled relations with Ivich. She, however, is spending the long vacation in the provinces and Mathieu is sunbathing in the south of France, and incidentally taking an interest in his sister-in-law. The approach of war makes him more than ever apathetic, reduces his stature, drains

his capacity to feel. He sees no point in his existence. Even the news of the mobilisation fails to awake his interest. (Ca ne l'ennuyait pas ça ou autre chose. Ca ne l'amuse pas non plus.) But he declares that his whole past has been wiped out. 'Il pensa ils m'ont débarrassé de ma vie'. This train of thought deserves more detailed scrutiny for here if anywhere is an instance of the 'philosophy' gaining the upper hand at the expense of probability, since the passage rests on the supposition that the hero never once foresaw that the years 1918-1938 were going to be *l'entre deux guerres*. (His disciple Boris, *knew* 'depuis le temps qu'on me répète qu'il va y avoir la guerre' and his whole way of life had been based on this knowledge.)

'C'est la guerre. Quelque chose qui ne tenait plus à lui que par un fil se détacha, se tassa et retomba en arrière. C'était sa vie, elle était morte. Morte. Il se retourna, il la regarda. L'avenir de Mathieu était là, à découvert, fixe et vitreux, hors de jeu. Mathieu était assis à une table de café, il buvait, il était par delà son avenir, il le regardait et il pensait "La paix". Mathieu pensa "J'ai eu un avenir pacifique". Un avenir pacifique il avait aimé, haï, souffert et l'avenir était là, autour de lui, au-dessus de sa tête, partout, comme un océan et chacune de ses rages, chacun de ses malheurs, chacun de ses rires s'alimentait à cet avenir invisible et présent. Un sourire, un simple sourire, c'était une hypothèque sur la paix de lendemain, de l'année suivante, du siècle, sinon je n'aurais jamais osé sourire. Des années et des années de paix future s'étaient déposées par avance sur les choses et les avaient mûries, dorées, prendre sa montre, la poignée d'une porte, une main de femme, c'était prendre la paix entre ses mains. L'après-guerre était un commencement. Le commencement de la paix. On la vivait sans se presser, comme on vit un matin. Le jazz était un commencement, et le cinéma, que j'ai tant aimé, était un commencement. Et le surréalisme. Et le communisme. J'hésitais, je choisisais longuement, j'avais le temps. Le temps, la paix, c'était la même chose. A présent cet avenir est là, à mes pieds, mort. C'était un faux avenir, une imposture. Il regardait ces vingt années qu'il avait vécues étalées, ensoleillées, une plaine marine et il voyait à présent comme elles avaient été un nombre fini de journées comprimées entre deux hauts murs sans espoir, une période cataloguée, avec un début et une fin, qui figurerait dans les manuels d'histoire sous le nom d'Entre-deux-guerres. Vingt ans 1918-1938. Seulement vingt ans! Hier ça semblait à la fois plus court et plus long. De toute façon on n'aurait pas eu l'idée de compter, puisque ça n'était pas terminé. A présent, c'est terminé. C'était un faux avenir. Tout ce qu'on a vécu depuis vingt ans, on l'a vécu à faux. Nous étions appliqués et sérieux, nous essayions de comprendre et voilà ces belles journées avaient un avenir secret et noir, elles nous trompaient, la guerre d'aujourd'hui, la nouvelle Grande Guerre nous les volait par en

dessous Nous étions cocus sans le savoir A présent la guerre est là, ma vie est morte, c'était ça, ma vie il faut tout reprendre du début Il chercha un souvenir, n'importe lequel, celui qui tenaitrait le premier, cette soirée qu'il avait passée à Prouse, assis sur la terrasse, mangeant une granite à l'abricot et regardant au loin, dans la poussière, la calme colline d'Assise Eh! bien, c'était la guerre qu'il aurait fallu lire dans le rougeolement du couchant Si j'avais pu, dans les lueurs rousses qui doraient la table et le parapet, soupçonner une promesse d'orage et de sang, elles m'appartiendraient a présent, du moins aurais-je sauvé ça Mais j'étais sans méfiance, la glace fondait sur ma langue, je pensais "Vieux ors, amour, gloire mystique" Et j'ai tout perdu

Il se sentait sinistre et léger il était nu, on lui avait tout volé Je n'ai plus rien a moi, pas même mon passé Mais c'était un faux passé et je ne le regrette pas Il pensa ils m'ont débarrassé de ma vie C'était une vie minable et ratée, Marcelle, Ivich, Daniel, une sale vie, mais ça m'est égal a présent, puisqu'elle est morte A partir de ce matin, depuis qu'ils ont collé ces affiches blanches sur les murs, toutes les vies sont ratées, toutes les vies sont mortes Si j'avais fait ce que je voulais, si j'avais pu, une fois, une seule fois, être libre, eh bien ça serait tout de même une sale duperie, puisque j'aurais été libre pour la paix, dans cette paix trompeuse et qu'a présent je serais tout de même ici, face a la mer, appuie a cette balustrade, avec toutes les affiches blanches derrière mon dos, toutes ces affiches qui parlent de moi, sur tous les murs de France, et qui disent que ma vie est morte et qu'il n'y a jamais eu de paix ça n'était pas la peine de me donner tant de mal, pas la peine d'avoir tant de remords

This lengthy quotation may serve to make another point Although French critics, even when hostile to the author's intentions, have praised the style of these novels, there are pages and pages of this kind of thing which strikes me as both wordy and forced M Sartre, however, has a talent for reproducing the various styles of slang spoken by the different sections of the nation Since I have ventured on what should be forbidden ground for the ignorant foreigner, I should add that M Sartre writes in a style suited to the matter in hand It does not call attention to itself But I suspect that a competent critic could make most of the points I have tried to establish through a discussion of the matter, much more effectively by an examination of the language

But to return to Mathieu Although the news produces such catastrophic upheavals in his past, the question of the rights and wrongs of the coming war does not arise for him 'Je pars parce que je ne peux pas faire autrement Après ça, que cette guerre soit juste ou injuste, pour moi, c'est très secondaire' He even goes so far as to say, 'Je n'ai jamais pu arriver à me faire une opinion sur ce genre de questions' He thinks of the war as 'la

plus absurde des guerres une guerre perdue d'avance', some thing to be put up with like an illness In any case, none of his business What is my business, he asks, and cannot find an answer

For a philosopher this is a unique quandary 'Jamais rien ne lui était arrivé qu'il n'eût compris, c'était sa seule force, son unique défense, sa dernière fierté tout ce qui l'avait atteint jusque là était à sa mesure d'homme La guerre le dépassait Ca n'est pas tant qu'elle me dépasse, c'est qu'elle *n'est pas là* Où est-elle? Partout Ah! pensa-t-il, il faudrait être partout à la fois il faudrait *me voir de partout*' These reflections precipitate a vision of the war, the logical starting point of the novel

'Un corps énorme, une planète, dans un espace à cent millions de dimensions, les êtres à trois dimensions ne pouvaient même pas l'imaginer Et pourtant chaque dimension était une conscience autonome Si on essayait de regarder la planète en face, elle s'effondrait en miettes, il ne restait plus que des consciences Cent millions de consciences libres dont chacune voyait des murs, un bout de cigare rougeoyant, des visages familiers, et construisait sa destinée sous sa propre responsabilité Et pourtant, si l'on *était* une des ces consciences, on s'apercevait à d'imperceptibles effleurements, à d'insensibles changements, qu'on était solidaire d'un gigantesque et invisible polyèdre La guerre chacun est libre et pourtant les jeux sont faits Elle est là, elle est partout, c'est la totalité de toutes mes pensées, de toutes les paroles d'Hitler, de tous les actes de Gomez (fighting in Spain) mais personne n'est là pour faire le total Elle n'existe que pour Dieu Mais Dieu n'existe pas Et pourtant la guerre existe'

So, for want of a divine perspective, M Sartre has chosen to offer us a kind of multiple vision Besides the Mathieu circle, there are some twenty groups including a schoolmaster in Czechoslovakia, an American journalist and his wife, a party of girl musicians returning from Algiers, Communists, Jews, Pacifists, to name a few The novel is built on a strict time scheme, almost hour by hour At each hour we are told what these groups are doing Sometimes a whole episode is given without interruption, more often various episodes are intertwined or scraps from the lives of one group are inserted in accounts of others In piecing together these fragments M Sartre sometimes uses merely verbal links Thus, for example, when in the long passage already quoted Mathieu says his life was dead we are switched off to a dead man of whom a relation remarks 'C'était un homme pacifique' We are then returned at once to Mathieu who was thinking 'j'ai eu un avenir pacifique' Sometimes the device resembles what film cutters call 'montage' Two events otherwise not related are joined by a similar bodily movement 'Pitiaux avait sonné, il attendait sur le palier en s'épongeant le front, Georges s'essuyait le front ' The effect of bringing disparate events into the same sentence is

perhaps deliberately confusing

In thus borrowing with adaptation the technique of Dos Passos and others M. Sartre is not, however, using it for the same purpose. He is not concerned to give a representative cross section of society. His interest is *metaphysical*. The choice of characters, is, however, largely designed to illustrate various attitudes to the war. Many episodes concern men called up because, like Mathieu, they have the 'fascicule 2'. Others show people who hate war, try to desert, or just do not understand, what it is all about. Mathieu says to his Spanish friend 'Il y a des types qui n'ont rien que leur vie Gomez. Et personne ne fait rien pour eux. Personne. Aucun gouvernement, aucun régime. Si le fascio remplaçait ici la République, ils ne s'en apercevraient même pas. Prenez un berger des Cévennes. Est-ce que vous croyez qu'il saurait pourquoi il se bat?'

M. Sartre has in fact taken such a shepherd and the various serio-comic mishaps which bring him finally to the barracks from one of the main chains of episodes of the novel. But M. Sartre is interested in even more negative approaches. A dead man is used as a foil to the living. He dwells with nauseating detail on the adventures of a paralysed boy, 'A lui 70 au-dessus de sa tête, c'était la guerre, la tourmente, l'honneur outragé, le devoir patriotique, mais au ras du sol, il n'y avait ni guerre ni paix, rien que la misère et la honte des sous-hommes, des pourris, des allongés'.

Most of these characters are, of course, puppets. The only real agents are the political figures who are more or less free to decide whether war shall be declared. We are given descriptions of the actions and thoughts of Hitler, Ribbentrop, Daladier and Chamberlain. And to hold this mass of material together the war itself is described as a thing. First as something not yet existing. 'La guerre *n'était pas* dans les champs, dans le tremblement immobile de l'air chauffé au-dessus de la haie, dans le pépiement rond et blanc des oiseaux, dans le rire de Marcelle, *elle s'était levée dans le désert* autour des murs de Marrakech'. At the critical moment of the meeting between Hitler and Chamberlain when the decision rests with the latter, the author passes in rapid review the activities of the principal characters at that second (mostly eating and drinking). 'Un instant elle avait éclaté dans la chambre de Milan, elle s'échappait par toutes les fenêtres, elle se déversait avec fracas chez les Jaegerschmitt, elle rôdait autour des remparts de Marrakech, elle soufflait sur la mer, elle écrasait les bâtiments de la rue Royale. *elle n'existait pas*, elle se jouait à pile ou face, entre deux glaces à trumeaux, dans les salons lambrissés de l'hôtel Dreesen'. Finally, the war arrives when Daladier informs Chamberlain that France is determined to go to war to support the Czechs. 'La guerre était là—Daladier regardait Chamberlain, il lisait la guerre dans ses yeux'. The patched-up agreement at Munich fills people with various feelings. Many regret foolish or hasty acts. The two young Russians in particular. Bons had volunteered to serve for three years in the colonial army, Ivich

abandons herself to a man she hates at the moment when the Czechs receive the official news of their betrayal

This elaborate construction does not quite come off. The impression of narrow concentration is not dissipated by the mere multiplication of loosely related incidents. The fundamental sameness (*la condition humaine*) is not enlarged and deepened. The two main characteristics of this state are apparently a feeling of loneliness and *l'angoisse*. But in each case we are merely told, e.g. 'il se sentait seul' or 'il y avait cette angoisse au creux de son estomac'. Daniel, in particular, is made the peg on which some interesting analyses are hung. I can well believe that they form a valuable appendix to *L'être et le néant*. The centre of the novel remains as before the series of crises in the soul of Mathieu.

Mathieu returns to Paris, which he finds transformed, almost unrecognizable. He contemplates the church of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, 'un homme tout seul, oublié, mange par l'ombre en face de cette éternité périssable. Il frissonna et pensa moi aussi, je suis éternel'. His past slips away from him. 'Il lâcha prise, il ne resta plus qu'un regard. Un regard tout neuf, sans passions, une simple transparence. J'ai perdu mon âme', pensa-t-il avec joie. 'A présent c'est mon regard seul qui s'attend dans l'avenir, à perte de vue, comme ces pierres s'attendent, s'attendent pierres, demain, après-demain, toujours. Un regard et une joie énorme comme la mer, c'était une fête. Il posa ses mains sur ses genoux, il voulait être calme qui me prouve que je ne redeviendrai pas demain ce que j'étais hier? Mais il n'avait pas peur. L'église peut crouler, je peux choir dans un trou d'obus, retomber dans ma vie rien ne peut m'ôter ce moment éternel. Rien il y aurait eu, pour toujours, cet éclair sec enflammant des pierres sous le ciel noir, l'absolu, pour toujours, l'absolu, sans cause, sans raison, sans but, sans autre passé, sans autre avenir que la permanence, gratuit, fortuit, magnifique. "Je suis libre" se dit-il soudain. Et sa joie se mua sur-le-champ en une écrasante angoisse'.

Dehors. Tout est dehors. tout ce qui pèse. Au dedans, rien, pas même une fumée, il n'y a pas de *dedans*, il n'y a rien. Moi rien. il se mit à rire. cette liberté, je l'ai cherchée bien loin, elle était si proche que je ne pouvais pas la voir, que je ne peux pas la toucher, elle n'était que moi. Je suis ma liberté. Il avait espéré qu'un jour il serait comblé de joie, percé de part en part par la foudre. Mais il n'y avait ni foudre ni joie, seulement ce dénuement, ce vide saisi de vertige devant lui-même, cette angoisse que sa propre transparence empêchait à tout jamais de se voir. Je ne suis rien, je n'ai rien. Aussi inséparable du monde que la lumière et pourtant exilé, comme la lumière, glissant à la surface des pierres et de l'eau, sans que rien, jamais, ne m'accroche ou ne m'ensable. Dehors. Dehors. Hors du monde, hors du passé, hors de moi-même. la liberté c'est l'exil et je suis condamné à être libre. Je suis libre *pour rien*'.

M. Sartre seems incapable of proceeding otherwise than by this type of expository statement. It has the effect of emptying

the character until nothing at all is left. Thus immediately after this vision, Mathieu, not knowing what use to make of his liberty, thinks of drowning himself. 'Pourquoi pas?' Il n'avait pas de raison particulière pour se laisser couler, mais il n'avait pas non plus de raison pour s'en empêcher. For the reader, at this moment, he is a paste-board figure, a placard carrying M. Sartre's view about *la liberté*. Mathieu himself feels cut off from his fellow soldiers: 'il n'était pas avec eux, il n'était qu'un halo pâle et éternel, il n'avait pas de destin'.

The novel ends vaguely in a manner reminiscent of *Les Mouches*. Mathieu refuses to return to his old haunts. 'Il se sentait fort, il y avait au fond de lui une petite angoisse qu'il commençait à connaître, une petite angoisse qui lui donnait confiance. N'importe qui, n'importe où. Il ne possédait plus rien, il n'était plus rien. La nuit sombre de l'avant-veille ne serait pas perdue, cet énorme remue-ménage ne serait pas tout à fait inutile. Qu'ils rengainent leur sabre, s'ils vendent, qu'ils fassent leur guerre, qu'ils ne la fassent pas, je m'en moque, je ne suis pas dupe. "Je resterai libre", pensa-t-il'.

Whether *La Dernière Chance* will transform this mass of statement into something living remains to be seen. There are indications in the little booklet that the two novels do not contain the whole of M. Sartre's philosophy, that there is a strenuous ethical side to his thought which so far has not been embodied either in a treatise or a literary work. Be that as it may, the popularity M. Sartre has earned rests on his published work. In speaking of the vogue enjoyed by Existentialism I referred to the less worthy elements. There remains to be considered the considerable number of adherents who have been attracted for more solid reasons, yet not because the technical side of the philosophy appealed to them and perhaps also not because they regarded the published works of M. Sartre as successful literary achievements. Many young people in France respond to the underlying attitudes, to the 'atmosphere' of the literary creations. That this is so, may be gathered from an examination of M. Sartre's philosophy which appeared last year⁵ which sets out by attempting to refute the starting points of Existentialism but soon concludes that these highly abstruse positions are not likely to scandalize anyone. What alarms the good Catholic is the negative assumptions of the philosophy. 'Que penser d'une philosophie existentielle qui ignore ou méconnaît des structures humaines aussi fondamentales que l'amitié, l'amour conjugal, le sentiment du devoir, l'émotion esthétique, la famille, la vie religieuse, etc.' Whether M. Sartre actually does regard these 'structures humaines' as non-existent is not clear. His characters act as if they did not exist, but that is another matter. Yet, as I hope to have indicated, the degree of complicity is not easy to determine. And just because of this the works attract those who go to literature to indulge their

⁵*Le choix de J.-P. Sartre*, by Roger Troisfontaines. Paris, 1945

sense of the collapse of all values. There is an active 'fifth column' in the most sanguine humanist who must acknowledge the existence on a wide scale of debased living, crude relationships, lack of roots, etc. Yet the notion of what fine living, human relationships, continuity might be, the ideal of a civilization is not lost. If the two novels under review are not followed by an embodied 'statement of positives', a felt contrast between what is and what might be, we must classify M. Sartre along with Dos Passos, if not with Céline. 'L'existentialisme', as a fundamental attitude in the works under review, 'n'est pas un humanisme'.

H. A. MASON

GEORGE ELIOT (III)

THE other character of whom pre-eminently it can be said that he could have been done only by someone who knew the intellectual life from the inside is Lydgate. He is done with complete success. 'Only those' his creator tells us, 'who know the supremacy of the intellectual life—the life which has a seed of ennobling thought and purpose in it—can understand the grief of one who falls from that serene activity into the absorbing soul-wasting struggle with worldly annoyances'. Lydgate's concern with 'ennobling thought and purpose' is very different from Dorothea's. He knows what he means, and his aim is specific. It is remarkable how George Eliot makes us feel his intellectual passion as something concrete. When novelists tell us that a character is a thinker (or an artist) we have usually only their word for it, but Lydgate's 'triumphant delight in his studies' is a concrete presence: it is plain that George Eliot knows intimately what it is like, and knows what his studies are.

But intensely as she admires his intellectual idealism,¹ and hornfyingly as she evokes the paralysing torpedo-touch of Rosamond, she doesn't make him a noble martyr to the femininity she is clearly so very far from admiring—the femininity that is incapable of intellectual interests, or of idealism of any kind. He is a gentleman in a sense that immediately recommends him to Rosamond—he is 'no radical in relation to anything but medical reform and the prosecution of discovery'. That is, the 'distinction' Rosamond admires is inseparable from a 'personal pride and unreflecting egoism' that George Eliot calls 'commonness'. In particular, his attitude towards women is such as to give a quality of poetic justice to his misalliance: 'he held it one of the prettiest attributes of the feminine mind to adore a man's pre-eminence without too

¹The medical profession, he believes, offers 'the most direct alliance between intellectual conquest and social good'.

precise a knowledge of what it consisted in' This insulation of his interest in the other sex from his serious interests is emphasized by our being given the history of his earlier affair with the French actress, Laure As a lover he is Rosamond Vincy's complement

The element of poetic justice in the relationship is apparent here (they are now married)

'He had regarded Rosamond's cleverness as precisely of the receptive kind which became a woman He was now beginning to find out what that cleverness was—what was the shape into which it had run as into a close network aloof and independent No one quicker than Rosamond to see causes and effects which lay within the track of her own tastes and interests she had seen clearly Lydgate's pre-eminence in Middlemarch society, and could go on imaginatively tracing still more agreeable social effects when his talent should have advanced him, but for her, his professional and scientific ambition had no other relation to these desirable effects than if they had been the fortunate discovery of an ill-smelling oil And that oil apart, with which she had nothing to do, of course she believed in her own opinion more than she did in his Lydgate was astounded to find in numberless trifling matters, as well as in this last serious case of the riding, that affection did not make her compliant'

The fact that there is nothing else in Rosamond beside her egoism—that which corresponds (as it responded) to Lydgate's 'commonness'—gives her a tremendous advantage, and makes her invincible She is simple ego, and the concentrated subtlety at her command is unembarrassed by any inner complexity She always knows what she wants, and knows that it is her due Other people usually turn out to be 'disagreeable people, who only think of themselves, and do not mind how annoying they are to her' For herself, she is always 'convinced that no woman could behave more irreproachably than she is behaving' No moral appeal can engage on her, she is as well defended by nature against that sort of embarrassment as she is against logic It is of no use accusing her of mendacity, or insincerity, or any kind of failure in reciprocity

'Every nerve and muscle in Rosamond was adjusted to the consciousness that she was being looked at She was by nature an actress of parts that entered into her *physique* she even acted her own character, and so well, that she did not know it to be precisely her own'

If one judges that there is less of sympathy in George Eliot's presentment of Rosamond than in her presentment of any other of her major characters (except Grandcourt in *Daniel Deronda*), one goes on immediately to note that Rosamond gives sympathy little lodgment It is tribute enough to George Eliot to say that the destructive and demoralizing power of Rosamond's triviality

wouldn't have seemed so appalling to us if there had been any animus in the presentment. We are, from time to time, made to feel from within the circumference of Rosamond's egoism—though we can't, of course, at any time be confined to it, and, there being no potential nobility here, it is implicitly judged that this case can hardly, by any triumph of compassion, be felt as tragic.

To say that there is no animus in the presentment of Rosamond is perhaps misleading if one doesn't add that the reader certainly catches himself, from time to time, wanting to break that graceful neck, the turns of which, as George Eliot evokes them, convey both infuriating obstinacy and a sinister hint of the snake. But Rosamond ministers too to our amusement, she figures in some of the best exchanges in a book rich in masterly dialogue. There is that between her and Mary Garth in Book I, Chapter XII, where she tests her characteristic suspicion that Mary is interested in Lydgate. The honours go easily to Mary, who, her antithesis, may be said to offset her in the representation of her sex, for Mary is equally real. She is equally a woman's creation too, and equally feminine, but femininity in her is wholly admirable—something that gives her in any company a wholly admirable advantage. Her good sense, quick intelligence and fine strength of character appear as the poised liveliness, shrewd good-humoured sharpness and direct honesty of her speech. If it were not a part of her strength to lack an aptitude for emotional exaltations, she might be said to represent George Eliot's ideal of femininity—she certainly represents a great deal of George Eliot's own characteristic strength.

Rosamond, so decidedly at a disadvantage (for once) with Mary Garth, is more evenly matched with Mrs. Bulstrode, who calls in Book III, Chapter XXXI, to find out whether the flirtation with Lydgate is, or is not, anything more than a flirtation. Their encounter, in which unspoken inter-appreciation of attire accompanies the verbal fence, occurs in the same chapter as that between Mrs. Bulstrode and Mrs. Plymdale, 'well-meaning women both, knowing very little of their own motives'. These encounters between women give us some of George Eliot's finest comedy, only a woman could have done them. And the comedy can be of the kind in which the tragic undertone is what tells most on us, as we see in Book VIII, Chapter LXXIV, where Mrs. Bulstrode goes the round of her friends in an attempt to find out what is the matter with her husband.

'In Middlemarch a wife could not long remain ignorant that the town held a bad opinion of her husband. No feminine intimacy might carry her friendship so far as to make a plain statement to the wife of the unpleasant fact known or believed about her husband, but when a woman with her thoughts much at leisure got them suddenly employed on something grievously disadvantageous to her neighbours, various moral impulses were called into play which tended to stimulate utterance. Candour

was one To be candid, in Middlemarch phraseology, meant, to use an early opportunity of letting your friends know that you did not take a cheerful view of their capacity, their conduct, or their position, and a robust candour never waited to be asked for its opinion Then, again, there was the love of truth Stronger than all, there was the regard for a friend's moral improvement, sometimes called her soul, which was likely to be benefited by remarks tending to gloom, uttered with the accompaniment of pensive staring at the furniture and a manner implying that the speaker would not tell what was on her mind, from regard to the feelings of her hearer'

The treatment of Bulstrode himself is a triumph in which the part of a magnificent intelligence in the novelist's art is manifested in some of the finest analysis any novel can show The peculiar religious world to which Bulstrode belongs, its ethos and idiom, George Eliot knows from the inside—we remember the Evangelicalism of her youth The analysis is a creative process, it is a penetrating imagination, masterly and vivid in understanding, bringing the concrete before us in all its reality Bulstrode is not an attractive figure

'His private minor loans were numerous, but he would inquire strictly into the circumstances both before and after In this way a man gathers a domain in his neighbours' hope and fear as well as gratitude, and power, when once it has got into that subtle region, propagates itself, spreading out of all proportion to its external means It was a principle with Mr Bulstrode to gain as much power as possible, that he might use it for the glory of God He went through a great deal of spiritual conflict and inward argument in order to adjust his motives, and make clear to himself what God's glory required'

This looks like a promise of satire But George Eliot's is no satiric art, the perceptions that make the satirist are there right enough, but she sees too much, and has too much the humility of the supremely intelligent whose intelligence involves self-knowledge, to be more than incidentally ironical Unengaging as Bulstrode is, we are not allowed to forget that he is a highly developed member of the species to which we ourselves belong, and so capable of acute suffering, and that his case is not as remote from what might be ours as the particulars of it encourage our complacency to assume² When his Nemesis closes in on him we feel his agonized twists and turns too much from within—that is the effect of George Eliot's kind of analysis—not to regard him with more compassion than contempt

'Strange, piteous conflict in the soul of this unhappy man who had longed for years to be better than he was—who had taken his selfish passions into discipline and clad them in severe robes, so that he had walked with them as a devout squire, till

now that a terror had risen among them, and they could chant no longer, but threw out their common cries for safety'

George Eliot's analysis is of the 'merciless' kind that only an intelligence lighted by compassion can attain

'At six o'clock he had already been long dressed, and had spent some of his wretchedness in prayer, pleading his motives for averting the worst evil if in anything he had used falsity and spoken what was not true before God. For Bulstrode shrank from a direct lie with an intensity disproportionate to the numbers of his more indirect misdeeds. But many of these misdeeds were like the subtle muscular movements which are not taken account of in the consciousness, though they bring about the end that we fix our mind on and desire. And it is only what we are vividly conscious of that we can vividly imagine to be seen by Omniscience'

Here he is, struggling with hope and temptation, by the bedside of his helpless tormentor

'Bulstrode's native imperiousness and strength of determination served him well. This delicate-looking man, himself nervously perturbed, found the needed stimulus in his strenuous circumstances, and through that difficult night and morning, while he had the air of an animated corpse returned to movement without warmth, holding the mastery by its chill impassibility, his mind was intensely at work thinking of what he had to guard against and what would win him security. Whatever prayers he might lift up, whatever statements he might inwardly make of this man's wretched spiritual condition, and the duty he himself was under to submit to the punishment divinely appointed for him rather than to wish for evil to another—through all this effort to condense words into a solid mental state, there pierced and spread with irresistible vividness the images of the events he desired. And in the train of those images came their apology. He could not but see the death of Raffles, and see in it his own

²'His doubts did not arise from the possible relations of the event to Joshua Rigg's destiny, which belonged to the unmapped regions not taken under the providential government, except perhaps in an imperfect colonial way, but they arose from reflecting that this dispensation too might be a chastisement for himself, as Mr Farebrother's induction to the living clearly was

'This was not what Mr Bulstrode said to any man for the sake of deceiving him, it was what he said to himself—it was as genuinely his mode of explaining events as any theory of yours may be, if you happen to disagree with him. For the egoism which enters into our theories does not affect their sincerity, rather the more our egoism is satisfied the more robust is our belief'

deliverance What was the removal of this wretched creature? He was impenitent—but were not public criminals impenitent?—yet the law decided on their fate Should Providence in this case award death, there was no sin in contemplating death as the desirable issue—if he kept his hands from hastening it—if he scrupulously did what was prescribed Even here there might be a mistake human prescriptions were fallible things Lydgate had said that treatment had hastened death—why not his own method of treatment? But of course intention was everything in the question of right and wrong

‘And Bulstrode set himself to keep his intention separate from his desire He inwardly declared that he intended to obey orders Why should he have got into any argument about the validity of these orders? It was only the common trick of desue—which avails itself of any irrelevant scepticism, finding larger room for itself in all uncertainty about effects, in every obscurity that looks like the absence of law Still, he did obey the orders’

Here is the commentary on his move to square Lydgate

‘The banker felt that he had done something to nullify one cause of uneasiness, and yet he was scarcely the easier He did not measure the quantity of diseased motive which had made him wish for Lydgate’s goodwill, but the quantity was none the less actively there, like an irritating agent in his blood A man vows, and yet will not cast away the means of breaking his vow Is it that he distinctly means to break it? Not at all, but the desires which tend to break it are at work in him dimly, and make their way into his imagination, and relax his muscles in the very moments when he is telling himself over again the reasons for his vow Raffles, recovering quickly, returning to the free use of his odious powers—how could Bulstrode wish for that?’

It is a mark of the quality of George Eliot’s presentment of Bulstrode that we should feel that the essential aspect of Nemesis for him is what confronts him here, in the guise of salvation, as he waits for the death he has ensured—ensured by disobeying, with an intention that works through dark indirections and tormented inner casuistries, Lydgate’s strict ‘doctor’s orders’

‘In that way the moments passed, until a change in the stentorous breathing was marked enough to draw his attention wholly to the bed, and forced him to think of the departing life, which had once been subservient to his own—which he had once been glad to find base enough for him to act on as he would It was his gladness then which impelled him now to be glad that the life was at an end

‘And who could say that the death of Raffles had been hastened? Who knew what would have saved him?’

Raffles himself is Dickensian, and so is Mr Borthrop Trumbull, the auctioneer, to say which is to suggest that, while adequate to

their functions, they don't exhibit that peculiar quality of life which distinguishes George Eliot's own creativeness. There is abundance of this quality in the book as a whole, we have it in the Garths, father, mother and daughter, the Vincy family, Mr Farebrother, the Cadwalladeis, and also in the grotesquerie of Peter Featherstone and his kin, which is so decidedly George Eliot and not Dickens.

The weakness of the book, as already intimated, is in Dorothea. We have the danger-signal in the very outset, in the brief Prelude, with its reference to St Theresa, whose 'flame fed from within, soared after some illimitable satisfaction, some object which would never justify weakness, which would reconcile self-despair with the rapturous consciousness of life beyond self' 'Many Therasas', we are told, 'have been born who found for themselves no epic life wherein there was a constant unfolding of far-resonant action'. In the absence of a 'coherent social faith and order which could perform the function of knowledge for the ardently willing soul' they failed to realize their aspiration. 'Their ardour alternated between a vague ideal and the common yearning of womanhood'. Their failure, we gather, was a case of 'a certain spiritual grandeur ill-matched with the meanness of opportunity'. It is a dangerous theme for George Eliot, and we recognize a far from reassuring accent. And our misgivings are not quieted when we find, in the close of the Prelude, so marked a reminder of Maggie Tulliver as this:

'Here and there a cygnet is reared uneasily among the ducklings in the brown pond, and never finds the living stream in fellowship with its own oary-footed kind. Here and there is born a Saint Theresa, foundress of nothing, whose loving heart-beats and sobs after an unattained goodness tremble off and are dispersed among hindrances, instead of centring in some long-recognisable deed.'

All the same, the first two chapters make us forget these alarms, the poise is so sure and the tone so right. When we are told of Dorothea Brooke that 'her mind was theoretic, and yearned by its nature after some lofty conception of the world which might fairly include the parish of Tipton, and her own rule of conduct there', we give that 'parish of Tipton' its full weight. The provinciality of the provincial scene that George Eliot presents is not a mere foil for a heroine, we see it in Dorothea herself as a callowness confirmed by culture: she and her sister had 'both been educated on plans at once narrow and promiscuous, first in an English family and afterwards in a Swiss family at Lausanne'. This is an education that makes little difference to Maggie Tulliver—who is now, we feel, seen by the novelist from the outside as well as felt from within. Dorothea, that is to say, is not exempted from the irony that informs our vision of the other characters in these opening chapters—Celia, Mr Brooke, Sir James Chetham and Mr Casaubon. It looks as if George Eliot had succeeded in

bringing within her achieved maturity this most resistant and incorrigible self

Unhappily, we can't go on in that belief for long. Already in the third chapter we find reasons for recalling the Prelude. In the description of the 'soul-hunger' that leads Dorothea to see Causaubon so fantastically as a 'winged messenger' we miss the poise that had characterized the presentment of her at her introduction.

'For a long while she had been oppressed by the indefiniteness which hung in her mind, like a thick summer haze, over all her desire to make her life greatly effective. What could she do, what ought she to do?' The intensity of her religious disposition, the coercion it exercised over her life, was but one aspect of a nature altogether ardent, theoretic, and intellectually consequent—and with such a nature struggling in the bands of a narrow teaching, hemmed in by a social life which seemed nothing but a labyrinth of petty courses, a walled-in maze of small paths that led no whither, the outcome was sure to strike others as at once exaggeration and inconsistency.

Aren't we here, we wonder, in sight of an unqualified self-identification? Isn't there something dangerous in the way the irony seems to be reserved for the provincial background and circumstances, leaving the heroine immune? The doubt has very soon become more than a doubt. When (in Chapter VII) Dorothea, by way of illustrating the kind of music she enjoys, says that the great organ at Freiberg, which she heard on her way home from Lausanne, made her sob, we can't help noting that it is the fatuous Mr Brooke, a figure consistently presented for our ironic contemplation, who comments 'That kind of thing is not healthy, my dear'. By the time we see her by the 'reclining Ariadne' in the Vatican, as Will Ladislaw sees her—

'a breathing, blooming girl, whose form, not shamed by the Ariadne, was clad in Quakerish grey drapery, her long cloak, fastened at the neck, was thrown backward from the arms, and one beautiful ungloved hand pillowed her cheek, pushing somewhat backward the white beaver bonnet which made a sort of halo to her face around the simply braided dark-brown hair'

—we are in a position to say that seeing her here through Will's eyes involves for us no adjustment of vision. This is how we *have* been seeing her—or been aware that we are meant to see her. And in general, in so far as we respond to the novelist's intention, our vision goes on being Will's.

The idealization is overt at the moment, finding its license in the surrounding statuary and in Will's rôle of artist (he is with his German artist friend). But Will's idealizing faculty clearly doesn't confine itself to her outward form even here, and when, thirty or so pages further on, talking with her and Causaubon, he reflects, 'She was an angel beguiled', we are clearly not meant to

dissociate ourselves or the novelist. In fact, he has no independent status of his own—he can't be said to exist, he merely represents, not a dramatically real point of view, but certain of George Eliot's intentions—intentions she has failed to realize creatively. The most important of these is to impose on the reader her own vision and valuation of Dorothea.

Will, of course, is also intended—it is not really a separate matter—to be, in contrast to Casaubon, a fitting soul-mate for Dorothea. He is not substantially (everyone agrees) 'there', but we can see well enough what kind of qualities and attractions are intended, and we can see equally well that we are expected to share a valuation of them extravagantly higher than any we can for a moment countenance. George Eliot's valuation of Will Ladislav, in short, is Dorothea's, just as Will's of Dorothea is George Eliot's. Dorothea, to put it another way, is a product of George Eliot's own 'soul-hunger'—another day-dream ideal self. This persistence, in the midst of so much that is so other, of an unreduced enclave of the old immaturity is disconcerting in the extreme. We have an alternation between the poised impersonal insight of a finely tempered wisdom and something like the emotional confusions and self-importances of adolescence.

It is given us, of course, at the outset, as of the essence of Dorothea's case, that she is vague in her exaltations, that she 'was oppressed by the indefiniteness which hung in her mind, like a thick summer haze, over all her desire to make her life greatly effective'. But the show of presenting this haze from the outside soon lapses, George Eliot herself, so far as Dorothea is concerned, is clearly in it too. That is peculiarly apparent in the presentment of those impossibly high-falutin' tête-à-tête—or soul to soul—exchanges between Dorothea and Will, which is utterly without irony or criticism. Their tone and quality is given fairly enough in this retrospective summary (it occurs at the end of Chapter LXXXII): 'all their vision, all their thought of each other, had been in a world apart, where the sunshine fell on tall white lilies, where no evil lurked, and no other soul entered'. It is Will who is supposed to be reflecting to this effect, but Will here—as everywhere in his attitude towards Dorothea—is unmistakably not to be distinguished from the novelist (as we have noted, he hardly exists)³.

There is, as a matter of fact, one place where for a moment George Eliot dissociates herself from him (Chapter XXXIX)

'For the moment Will's admiration was accompanied with a chilling sense of remoteness. A man is seldom ashamed of feeling that he cannot love a woman so well when he sees a certain greatness in her, nature having intended greatness for men'

³—Though, significantly, it is he alone who is adequate to treating Rosamund with appropriate ruthlessness—see the episode (Chapter LXXVIII) in which he 'tells her straight' what his author feels about her.

What she dissociates herself from, it will be noted, is not the valuation, the irony is not directed against that, but, on the contrary, implicitly endorses it. To point out that George Eliot identifies herself with Will's sense of Dorothea's 'subduing power, the sweet dignity, of her noble unsuspecting inexperience', doesn't, perhaps, seem a very damaging criticism. But when it becomes plain that in this self-identification such significant matters of valuation are involved the criticism takes on a different look.

'Men and women make such sad mistakes about their own symptoms, taking their vague uneasy longings, sometimes for genius, sometimes for religion, and oftener still for a mighty love'

—The genius of George Eliot is not questioned, but what she observes here in respect of Rosamond Vincy has obvious bearings on her own immature self, the self persisting so extraordinarily in company with the genius that is self-knowledge and a rare order of maturity.

Dorothea, with her 'genius for feeling nobly', that 'current' in her mind 'into which all thought and feeling were apt sooner or later to flow—the reaching forward of the whole consciousness towards the fullest truth, the least partial good' (end of Chapter XX), and with her ability to turn that current into a passion for Will Ladislaw, gives us Maggie's case again, and Maggie's significance again we have the confusions represented by the exalted vagueness of Maggie's 'soul-hunger', we have the unacceptable valuations and the day-dream self-indulgence.

The aspect of self-indulgence is most embarrassingly apparent in Dorothea's relations (as we are invited to see them) with Lydgate, who, unlike Ladislaw, is real and a man. Lydgate's reality makes the unreality of the great scene intended by George Eliot (or by the Dorothea in her) the more disconcerting. The scene in which to Lydgate, misunderstood, isolated, ostracized, there appears, an un hoped-for angelic visitation, Dorothea, all-comprehending and irresistibly good (Chapter LXXVI)

'“Oh, it is hard!” said Dorothea. “I understand the difficulty there is in your vindicating yourself. And that all this should have come to you who had meant to lead a higher life than the common, and to find out better ways—I cannot bear to rest in this as unchangeable. I know you meant that. I remember what you said to me when you first spoke to me about the hospital. There is no sorrow I have thought more about than that—to love what is great, and try to reach it, and yet to fail!”

'“Yes”, said Lydgate, feeling that here he had found room for the full meaning of his grief.

'“Suppose”, said Dorothea meditatively. “Suppose we kept on the hospital according to the present plan, and you stayed here though only with the friendship and support of the few, the evil feeling towards you would gradually die out, there would

come opportunities in which people would be forced to acknowledge that they had been unjust to you, because they would see that your purposes were pure. You may still win a great fame like the Louis and Laennec I have heard you speak of, and we shall all be proud of you", she ended, with a smile.

We are given a good deal in the same vein of winning simplicity. Such a failure in touch, in so intelligent a novelist, is more than a surface matter, it betrays a radical disorder. For *Lydgate*, we are told, the 'childlike grave-eyed earnestness with which Dorothea said all this was irresistible—blent into an adorable whole with her ready understanding of high experience'. And lest we shouldn't have appreciated her to the full, we are told that

'As *Lydgate* rode away, he thought, "This young creature has a heart large enough for the Virgin Mary. She evidently thinks nothing of her own future, and would pledge away half her income at once, as if she wanted nothing for herself but a chair to sit in from which she can look down with those clear eyes at the poor mortals who pray to her. She seems to have what I never saw in any woman before—a fountain of friendship towards men—a man can make a friend of her".'

What we have here is unmistakably something of the same order as *Romola's* epiphany in the plague-stricken village, but worse—or at any rate, more painfully significant. Offered as it is in a context of George Eliot's maturest art, it not only matters more, it forces us to recognize how intimately her weakness attends upon her strength. Stressing the intended significance of the scene she says, in the course of it

'The presence of a noble nature, generous in its wishes, ardent in its charity, changes the lights for us. We begin to see things again in their larger, quieter masses, and to believe that we too can be seen and judged in the wholeness of our character.'

This is a characteristic utterance, and, but for the illustration we are being offered, we should say it came from her strength—the strength exhibited in her presentment of *Casaubon*, *Rosamond*, *Lydgate* and *Bulstrode*. It is certainly her strength as a novelist to have a noble and ardent nature—it is a condition of that maturity which makes her so much greater an artist than (to take up the challenge of Francophil modishness) *Flaubert*. What she says of *Dorothea* might have been said of herself.

'Permanent rebellion, the disorder of a life without some loving reverent resolve, was not possible to her.'

But that she says it of *Dorothea* must make us aware how far from a simple trait it is we are considering, and how readily the proposition can slide into such another as this.

'No life would have been possible for *Dorothea* that was not filled with emotion.'

Strength, and complacent readiness to yield to temptation—they are not at all the same thing, but we see how insidiously, in George Eliot, they are related. Intensely alive with intelligence and imaginative sympathy, quick and vivid in her realization of the 'equivalent centre of self' in others—even in a Casaubon or a Rosamond, she is incapable of morose indifference or the normal routine obtuseness, and it may be said in a wholly laudatory sense, by way of characterizing her at her highest level, that no life would have been possible for her that was not filled with emotion. Her sensibility is directed outward, and she responds from deep within. At this level, 'emotion' is a disinterested response defined by its object, and hardly distinguishable from the play of the intelligence and self-knowledge that give it impersonality. But the emotional 'fulness' represented by Dorothea depends for its exalting potency on an abeyance of intelligence and self-knowledge, and the situations offered by way of 'objective correlative' have the day-dream relation to experience, they are generated by a need to soar above the indocile facts and conditions of the real world. They don't, indeed, strike us as real in any sense, they have no objectivity, no vigour of illusion. In this kind of indulgence, complaisantly as she abandons herself to the current that is loosed, George Eliot's creative vitality has no part.

F R LEAVIS

[To be concluded with *Daniel Deronda* and *The Portrait of a Lady*]

GOETHE'S 'FAUST' AND THE WRITTEN WORD

(III) *THE SECOND PART (CONCLUDED)*

CLASSICAL WALPURGIS NIGHT

THIS classical Sabbath (roughly fifteen hundred lines of miscellaneous verse) makes the Germanic Walpurgis Night of the *First Part* seem in retrospect as sober and respectable as a drawing-room comedy. The mythical figures which float along the Pharsalian plains range from sphinxes, griffins, giant ants, pigmies and the Cranes of Ibycus to Nereus, Seismos and Chiron, not to mention droves of dryads, sirens, lamiae, and two quarrelsome and rather boring ancient philosophers. The verse is always in character (in as far as droids and dryads have any character), and the reader with a taste for Greek myth and legend and 'unnatural history' will find plenty here to interest him. But the reader interested in Faust will find next to nothing to suit his

tastes, nor am I convinced that the reader full of enthusiasm for the earlier stages in the evolution of the spirit will be thrown into a state of perpetual excitement

But this long fantastic stretch of verse is a remarkable, a unique achievement, the adjective is for once appropriate. As the glittering wealth of lyric cascades past him, the critic can only grit his teeth to think how little of it can be changed into the human currency of the *First Part*

When they arrive at this significant locality Mephisto suggests that they should separate, each 'to seek his own adventures'. Mephisto's adventures are chiefly of the amatory kind, and far from successful, he has now suffered an utter relegation to the rank of buffoon in real earnest, and it is with genuine regret that we find him to whom we listened respectfully in the counsels of Heaven now playing a kind of blindman's buff among the wanton Lamiae. No longer the Son of Chaos or a Prince of Darkness, no longer the 'spirit who denies', he is now merely the bogey-man from the North, the simple, crude homespun from the 'wastes of chivalry and priesthood'

Faust, who goes in search of Helen, does his best to link this vast and amorphous mythic-panorama with the body of the play by indicating the kind of significance it has for him—pointing to the sphinxes, sirens and so on, he cries

Vom frischen Geiste fuhl' ich mich durchdrungen,
Gestalten gross, gross die Erinnerungen

(I feel a freshening spirit has swept through me—great figures, great the memories)

Homunculus, the last of the trio, concludes his search for a body by incontinently hurling himself at Galatea's chariot: the glass breaks and he disappears in a bright blaze of obscure glory with which the *Classical Walpurgis Night* ends or, as Goethe more aptly expressed it, 'runs out into the endless'. Homunculus' fate is, I fear, highly significant, though the text does no more than insinuate that it is no unmixed calamity. I think the reader will agree on this point.

We ought to notice this further reminiscence of the Lord's declaration ('as long as he strives, man must err')—again it comes from Mephisto, speaking to Homunculus who proposes to associate himself with the two peripatetic philosophers in the hope that they will help him to find materiality.

Wenn du nicht irrst, kommst du nicht zu Verstand
Willst du entstehn, entsteh' auf eigne Hand!

(Unless you err, you'll never come to understanding. If you wish to begin life, begin life at your own expense!)

But now it is not a statement made, against opposition, in the course of an argument, too flaccid, in its context, to be called

an epigram, it is better described as a copybook maxim. This suggests a useful distinction (an aspect, indeed, of the *radical* distinction) between the mode of operation of the *First Part* and that of the *Second* as long as the sentiments, sentences and epigrams fit in with the general tenor of the *Second Part*, it does not matter in the least *who* gives voice to them, for all that is aimed at is a *general impression* of useful activity, all the characters contribute to this impression (it is amazing how busy the phantoms of the classical Sabbath appear to be, all of them rushing about like mad)—even Mephisto adds his mite, after a fashion and this impression is conveyed rather in the ways employed by the more skilful of the professional propagandists and copy-writers: the message is to be communicated through a vague, soothing harmony, in which it is not so much hammered away at as urbanely assumed. *Agreement*, that is, is the key-note of this part, whereas sharp disagreement and violent conflict was the key-note of the earlier drama, in which the message (itself, as a result, more precise) was communicated through a bitter struggle of opposed elements during which a probing and testing took place simultaneously. It is not only 'tragedy' that is so conspicuously absent from this latter section: it is that sense of conflict which makes the spectator all the reader to accept the final verdict. What the *Second Part* at present lacks is not so much a hero as a protagonist. Mephisto, in the lines I have just quoted, Homunculus, with his 'Dieweil ich bin, muss ich auch thatig sein' ('While I exist, I must be active too') and Faust, in strenuous quest of Helen, all seem for the moment in complete unanimity and concord. Only the reader remains outside this charmed circle, unconvinced or, even worse, apathetic.

Before leaving this scene, I had better make the observation that Goethe was not attempting to do anything other than what he accomplished. My criticisms are of the poet's conception rather than his achievement, for the latter chimes admirably with the former. Eckermann reports Goethe as having said, of the *Classical Walpurgis Night*, 'The mythological figures which crowd upon me are innumerable, but I restrain myself, and merely select those that produce the proper pictorial effect.' Whatever we may feel about Goethe's idea of 'restraint', we have to admit that the pictorial effects are most striking—'finely executed' is the phrase, I think—and the *Peneos* section is particularly fine. Here Goethe's ability to conjure up vivid scenes in a few words is displayed at its best, notably in Chiron's account of the Argonauts—neat character-sketches of the heroes where everything is tightly packed into small and weighty parcels.

Im hehren Argonautenkreise

War jeder brav nach seiner eignen Weise

et seq

We may find a certain unhappy irony in the fact that, despite the sparse economy of images whereby so sharply-defined a picture is evoked locally (as here and in Homunculus' description of Faust's

dream, the brightest spot in the Laboratory episode), the overwhelming effect of this and other sections should be one of spendthrift extravagance and almost wicked fluency

ACT III THE HELENA

This act, the first section of the *Second Part* to be finished, was published separately in 1827, under the title 'A Classic-Romantic Phantasmagoria'. It was not inappropriately named. The plot is simple, if intriguing. Helen, returning home after the sack of Troy, ahead of Menelaus who has instructed her to prepare a sacrifice, discovers that she herself is to be the sacrifice¹ and takes refuge in a near-by castle, the property of a kind of glorified Robber Baron, leader of an invading host from medieval Germany. Menelaus is put to flight, Helen and Faust (for he, of course, is the Robber Baron) eventually have a son, Euphion by name, who in an excess of genius (though remarkably youthful) emulates Icarus and crashes to the ground, whereupon 'We believe we catch sight of a well-known figure in the dead body, but the corporeal vanishes at once, the aureole rises up to heaven like a comet, and the robe, cloak and lyre remain on the ground' (The 'well-known figure' is Lord Byron, gratifyingly enough). Helen therewith returns to the shades, and Faust and Mephisto finally take their leave of ancient Greece.

Goethe's exposition of the act's meaning needs little expansion. 'Even in the opening acts, the classic and the romantic are constantly being mentioned, so that we ascend, as it were, stage by stage to the *Helena*, where both forms appear fully and find that they are at peace together'. More precisely, the union of Faust and Helen symbolises the Renaissance, in which medieval culture was fused with the culture of ancient Greece, or, to use the terms of aesthetics, it represents the merging of classical and romantic to produce a new poetry—the modern. Euphion is the 'spirit' of this poetry, and Byron (for whom Goethe had the liveliest admiration²) the exemplar.

I think the Euphion episode is worth a brief consideration for the light it throws on the species of symbolism found in the *Second Part*. In spite of the parental warning, 'hüte dich zu fliegen, freier Flug ist dir versagt' ('beware of flying, unrestricted flight is forbidden you'), Euphion repudiates all moderation and reason—more like the thoroughbred romantics, we should have thought—

¹It is surprising to find how very little in the plot-element of *Faust* was actually invented by Goethe. This version of Helen's fate after Troy was taken from the *Troades* of Euripides, and even so minor an incident as the 'false fire' with which the Court Masquerade ends was based on historical facts.

²I could take no-one but Byron to represent our modern age in poetry. Without question he is the greatest genius of the century' (to Eckermann).

and crashes to his doom. Then follows the famous allusion to Byron. But what are we to gather from this unfortunate accident? That modern poetry has come to a bad end, or merely that Byron has died at Missolonghi and modern poetry has lost its finest flower? Is it a particular or a general reference? And, either way, what deductions are we to make concerning the *value* of this reconciliation of romantic and classical? The thought of Goethe's well-known and unequivocating definition, 'I call the classical *healthy*, the romantic *sickly*', hardly helps to clarify this moot point. It may be objected that these criticisms of mine are querulous and niggling and that Goethe, in the *Helena*, was not writing literary criticism. I admit that it is possible to enjoy the *Helena* however puzzled and dissatisfied one may feel about the Euphion affair, to enjoy it immensely—but the highest kind of enjoyment (the kind we derived from the so humble *First Part*) is precluded by this haphazard and shifting pseudo-symbolism. Can the critic blame Goethe for failing to carry through something he did not aim at? Only if he creates the atmosphere proper—and proper *only*—to the purpose he did not intend.

There is perhaps one possible misconception, an easy one to spot, we had better deal with before returning to the text. Stawell and Dickinson, in pointing out that no previous writer had thought of giving Helen a share in Faust's redemption, wrote that 'on the contrary, it had always been treated as the supreme temptation. Perhaps the greatest single achievement in Goethe's remodelling of the old plot lies in his handling of this subject. The evils of lust he had dealt with in the Gretchen-tragedy and he is free to use the pursuit of Helen for a further symbolism'. But, surely, the symbolism of the *Helena* is 'further' than this remark would seem to imply. The question at issue is rather more radical: whether, in fact, this further symbolism has any relevance *at all* to the Faust who was partly responsible for the Gretchen-tragedy. The *Helena* is, to say the least of it, *overwhelmingly* significant in the macro-cosmic aspect of the work, not in the microcosmic. Helen, as Beauty, is a historical rather than a moral factor. It is *possible*, of course, to make out a case for the section as touching the influence of beauty on Faust's struggling soul—what interpretation isn't possible in so gigantic a work of poetry?—but there is such slight evidence in the written word for so doing that the reader can rightly do no more, I feel, than 'bear the possibility in mind'.

Yet, despite all these imminent traps and pit-falls, the reader's first feeling as he listens to the queenly rhythms of Helen's opening speech is one of great relief. After the surfeit of lyric verse which comprised the preceding *Classical Walpurgis Night*, these solid yet subtle iambic trimeters are more than welcome. This short speech sets the scene immediately—it creates *locality* with all the swift certainty of a conjurer producing a rabbit out of a hat—and, as Helen's story is succinctly related, it is a very real, historical Greece that is evoked—the Greece of the tragedians, not the fancy land of dionys, dryads, and song and dance.

Bewundert viel und viel gescholten, Helena,
Vom Strande komm' ich, wo wir erst gelandet sind

Helen, incidentally, is a very impressive *character*—yes, with her one can once again use the terminology proper to the *First Part*. But to say this is not to suggest any modification of my statement that the *Helena* is predominantly operative in the wider, abstract sense of the play. And the fact that Helen (at any rate till she meets Faust) is depicted so sensitively and convincingly in flesh and blood will not prevent most people agreeing with Lewes' blunt dictum that 'the kiss of Gretchen is worth a thousand allegories'. Truth is, it is typical of the fertile invention and enthusiastic creativeness displayed by the poet in the *Second Part* that so magnificently sculpted a figure as Helen should—when the dim allegory demands—fade into thin air, leaving behind, so incongruously, only her robes and veil.

Having referred to the main symbolism of the *Helena*, I do not think there is any need to dwell on possible interpretations of particular passages. I doubt whether this kind of interpretation is really very rewarding. Charming incidents like Helen's amazement at the invaders' strange manner of speech (*i.e.*, rhyme) and the lovers' device of rhyming dialogue whereby Faust teaches her to speak his 'language' are self-evident in their significance, that Mephisto-Phorkyas' attack on Helen's flighty maidens is a pragmatical attack on beauty in its more sinister aspects—'Mauling you, seducing as seduced, who enervate both, the warrior's strength and the citizen's too'³—can be fairly safely deduced. Similarly, when Faust's armies of modern nations clash with Menelaus' forces, we admit to perceiving that ancient and modern are struggling for the possession of beauty, but whether we can go as far as Stawell and Dickinson—the *Helena*, they say, turns on 'the conviction that Beauty needs the well-ordered community'—is a rather different matter. The idea of community certainly does figure in the play, but not until later and in a very different context, and we have already seen that the species of allegory that Goethe is spinning is governed by no severe rules pertaining to consistence or continuity, so we should beware of attributing to every development in the 'story' a corresponding allegorical meaning. Once we allow this kind of ingenuity to creep into our reading we may well find ourselves debating whether Lynceus, Faust's look-out, is 'the idealising love of the troubadours' or 'the medieval Church in her attitude towards the New Learning'.⁴ These points are of little importance—unlike the Euphronion-Byron crux, they do not obtrude themselves or demand interpretation.

Nor, it seems to me, does Goethe himself encourage us to over-tax our interpretive faculties, the stage directions, indeed, rather suggest the opposite.

³Cf. Thomas Mann's short stories, especially *Death in Venice*.

⁴Examples of 'hunt the significance' quoted by A. G. Latham.

HELEN and CHORUS

stand astonished and terrified, in a significant, well-planned group

and, at the beginning of the Euphorion episode,

The music of strings, charming and of the purest melody, sounds from the cavern All listen to it and soon appear profoundly moved From here to the marked pause with full orchestral accompaniment

Costumes, music, 'explosions from the tower', stage-craft, and another of Mephisto's 'asides' to the audience ('you bearded ones who sit expectantly down there')—everything to engage the reader's mental eye and ear, rather than bring his powers of deduction into play

Predominantly allegorical though the *Helena* is, and so far removed from the 'narrow gothic chamber' in which we first met Faust, yet there takes place during this 'phantasmagoria' a certain development in the character of that earlier Faust. It would, however, be more accurate to express it this way: the impression we receive of the allegorical Teutonic Lord inevitably modifies the impression we have already formed of Dr. Heinrich Faust the hero of the *First Part*, however clear we are about the gulf that yawns between them. There is no thinking or interpreting about this—it simply happens.

Phorkyas describes the leader of the 'barbarians' as 'ein muntre, kecker, wohlgebildeter, Wie unter Griechen wenig, ein verständiger Mann' ('cheerful, daring, well-favoured and—like few among the Greeks—a sensible man'), and Helen's chorus praise him as one who will 'always succeed in what he attempts'. Besides being the paragon of chivalry, this Faust is certainly an energetic and resolute man, for even in his love-scene with Helen he cries

Durchgrübe nicht das einzigste Geschick!
Dasein ist Pflicht, und war's ein Augenblick

(Do not brood on the rarest destiny! Existence is duty, if it's only a moment)⁵

Dasein ist Pflicht how excellent a maxim for the ambition-bound Faust of the first soliloquy! And in this way, conscious though we are of the vast dichotomy between the allegorical Faust and the Faust who was symbolic only in suffering the agony of spirit common to humanity, the activities of the former are bound to react upon our memory and valuation of the latter, consequently we are saved from the incredulity we might otherwise experience when we find that, in the final act, Faust has turned into an Empire builder

⁵Rilke, after his poetry's many agonies, cries 'Hiersein ist herrlich', Goethe, after his play's many neglected duties, cries 'Dasein ist Pflicht'

The *Helena* concludes with the Chorus choosing to merge into Nature rather than return to Hades with their mistress and so dividing into tree-nymphs, mountain-nymphs, fountain-nymphs and vine-nymphs, and expressing their new characters in amazing virtuosic effusions comparable, for sheer sustained brilliance and vivacity, to nothing in English poetry so much as to Hopkins's *Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves*. Then, so that the curtain may fall on a fittingly pictorial tableau, Phorkyas

rears herself up, giant-like in the prescenum, steps out of her buskins, removes her mask and veil and shows herself as Mephistopheles

ACT IV

Act IV is undoubtedly the least rewarding part of the whole play. The action is interesting only as a necessary preliminary to the last act, and even so it could, with advantage, be much shorter. The few glimpses we receive of the rehabilitated Faust, however, are of considerable moment.

We are transported back to German soil once more. Faust enters on a convenient cloud, while Mephisto turns up in seven-league boots (a very *Germanic* mode of conveyance, we note). Faust's opening speech—the finest poetry of this act—contains what is presumably a reference to Gretchen

Tauscht mich ein entzuckend Bild
Als jugenderstes, langstentbehrtes hochstes Gut?

(Am I deluded by that entrancing form, like youthful-first, long-denied and highest happiness?)

Thinking of the moral issue enunciated in the *Prologue in Heaven*, we may well feel a certain relief and pleasure in finding that Faust has not quite forgotten the unhappy Gretchen—but the thought is quickly dismissed from his mind, and since Faust does not moralize over it I hardly think we should.

The ensuing dialogue between Faust and Mephisto, on the contrary, is most illuminating. Faust tells his companion that he has conceived a great plan and Mephisto, who seems to have fallen somewhat behind the times (and is, by now, more of a running commentator than an active tempter) replies contemptuously

Errath man wohl, wornach du strebst?
Es war gewiss erhaben-kuhn
Der du dem Mond um so viel naher schwebtest,
Dich zog wohl deine Sucht dahin?

(Who can guess what you are aspiring to? No doubt it is sublimely bold. Perhaps your mania draws you to the moon, to which you're soaring so much nearer?)

But Faust retorts

Mit nichten! dieser Erdenkreis
Gewahrt noch Raum zu grossen Thaten
Erstaunenswürdiges soll gerathen,
Ich fühle Kraft zu kühnem Fleiss

(No such thing! This sphere of earth still ensures scope
for great deeds Marvellous things shall be done—strength
I feel for boldness and diligence)

Faust has learnt that activity is man's 'natural element'—human activity on this human earth Being a man of unusual powers he desires not only activity, but active leadership

Herrschaft gewinn' ich, Eigenthum!
Die That ist alles, nichts der Ruhm

(Dominion I'll win, and ownership! The deed is all,
nothing the fame)

This plan concerns the reclamation of land from the sea, quite a new kind of ambition for Faust not a romantic dream now, but a practicable and comprehensible scheme It is certainly a big job that Faust is setting himself, but (as we will readily admit after the *Helena*) not impossibly big, for at least it is confined to this earth and this life

When Faust relates the experience which gave rise to this great conception it seems, at first, that irritation at the overbearing 'arrogance' (*Übermuth*) of the sea was the main factor—not a very convincing impetus—but it is clear from what he goes on to say that it was really the consequent *waste*, the useless drowned land, that has aroused his anger

Es schleicht heran, an abertausend Enden,
Unfruchtbar selbst, Unfruchtbarkeit zu spenden,
Nun schwillt's und wächst und rollt und überzieht
Der wusten Strecke widerlich Gebiet
Da herrschet Well' auf Welle kraftbegeistet,
Zieht sich zurück, und es ist nichts geleistet
Was zur Verzweiflung mich beangstigen konnte,
Zwecklose Kraft unbandiger Elemente!
Da wagt mein Geist, sich selbst zu überfliegen
Hier mocht' ich kämpfen, dies mocht' ich besiegen
Und es ist möglich!

(It crawls along, in a thousand blind rills, unfruitful itself, spreading unfruitfulness, now it swells and grows and rolls and covers the hateful regions of the barren land In its powerful urge, wave after wave rules, and then retreats, and nothing is accomplished It drives me to despair, this aimless strength of intractable elements! So my spirit dares to surpass itself here must I struggle, this I must vanquish And it is possible!)

Unfruchtbarkeit Faust's animus is directed against unfruitfulness, and to regard this as a *moral* animus, a hatred not merely of inactivity but, further, of all sterile activity, requires only the kind of interpretation which the reader may exercise without hesitation or doubt—interpretation of a different *kind* from that which debated the significance of Lynceus or (which, alas, occurs later in this very act) the battle between the griffin and the eagle.⁶ This speech of Faust's, this very moving outburst, is the clearest confirmation we have yet had of the Lord's optimism in that far-off, but still-remembered, *Prologue in Heaven*.

Unhappily this striking development in the original theme is shelved for the present when Mephisto suggests that, as a first step in the furtherance of Faust's plan, they should ingratiate themselves with the Emperor (whom we met at the beginning of the *Second Part*) by helping him quell the rebellion which his incompetence has brought about. This plunges us back into the shadowy realm of phantasmagoria. Mephisto produces the Three Mighty Men out of the Book of Samuel, quite openly remarking

allegorisch wie die Lumpen sind
Sie werden nur um desto mehr behagen

(allegorical as the rascals are, they will only be so much the apter)

The battle is far from edifying even after the conscription by Mephisto of innumerable suits of armour inhabited by spare spectres, the issue remains in doubt until further magical effects are brought into action. All this monstrous trickery, serving only to provide Faust with the opportunity to put his plan of reclamation to the test—for it has few attractions in its own right—is part of that disconcerting lack of proportion between ends and means characteristic of the *Second Part*.

The final scene, where the victorious Emperor rewards his ministers, is especially barren. This sketch of Imperial government may well have a certain bearing on the larger theme of the *Second Part*, but what exact bearing is more difficult to say. The scene is written throughout in alexandrines and this, the commentators say, is meant to illustrate the hollow pomp and empty circumstance of the Court. But when we have to jog-trot through two hundred lines of trivial matter in this deliberately stultifying rhythm (so different from the changeful swaying movement of Helen's iambic trimeters) we wonder if there are not easier and pleasanter methods of representing pomp and circumstance.

⁶Presumable a good omen since the genuine eagle conquers the fabulous griffin—i.e., the lawful Emperor will conquer the false Pretender. On the other hand, it might just as easily be a bad omen, since the enemy's soldiers are genuine human beings, whereas the Emperor depends on Mephisto's army of phantoms and magical effects.

ACT V

In this, the momentous last act, we are introduced to Faust's finished work—the kingdom recovered from the sea which, before it existed, Faust had claimed as his reward for helping the Emperor win the war. The Philemon and Baucis episode has, to the modern mind, a tinge of the maudlin about it, and the traditional device of the Stranger (whereby the extent of Faust's operations is disclosed to the reader) is just a little clumsy, yet all this secondary matter is, unlike elsewhere, kept within reasonable bounds. Even so, the unreal, masque-like quality of so much of the earlier action persists, rather incongruously, through the use of names such as Philemon, Baucis and Lynceus. The dear old couple who own a cottage and chapel on a hill within Faust's kingdom might have been better named Darby and Joan, for Philemon and Baucis have connotations altogether out of place here—for a moment the reader wonders whether the Stranger will turn out to be Jupiter, or maybe Mercury. With a similar economy, Lynceus the watchman shares a generic name with the watchman of Faust's medieval castle in Greece and, ultimately, the steersman of the *Argo*.

But what is of crucial importance, at this late stage in the play, is Faust's achievement itself. What significance has it? Is it a selfish whim, an expression of self-conceit, or is it a work of tangible human value? We may remember the 'most feasible business' which Meercraft the Projector broaches in Jonson's play, *The Devil is An Ass*

The thing is for recovery of drown'd land
I have computed all, and made my survey
Unto my acre I'll begin at the pan,
Not at the skirts, as some have done, and lost
All that they wrought, their timber-work, their trench,
Their banks, all borne away, or else fill'd up,
By the next winter Tut, they never went
The way I'll have it all

Santayana inclines to the unkind view of Faust's 'project', for he writes that 'this last ambition of Faust's is as romantic as the others

It is one more arbitrary passion, one more selfish illusion' While it is easy to sympathize with Santayana's scepticism—which seems to indicate how *little* of a development in Faust's character even the trained mind may infer from the *Classical Walpurgis Night* and the *Helena*⁷—I do not think there is anything to justify it in the verse of this act itself. Santayana (if I may be permitted the rhetorical assumption) is very probably reasoning along these lines: 'Faust's plan is romantic, arbitrary and selfish because we have no cause to suppose that it would be otherwise'. Yet the reader ought to be conscious of some subtle change in his conception of

⁷And how applicable is Johnson's saying, 'Delusion, if delusion be admitted, has no certain limitation'

Faust, for (if I may repeat myself) however allegorical Faust's forcible behaviour and remarkably refreshing *savour-faire* during the Helen story may have been, they must have had certain, though naturally milder, repercussions, on our idea of Faust's personal character. And, quite apart from all this admittedly vague and shadowy evidence, the very corpus of the fifth act states quite unmistakably that this achievement (for it is an achievement) is in a different class from the ultramundane aspirations of his earlier years (Faust is now, by the way, in 'extreme old age'). As Philemon tells the Stranger

Das euch grimmig missgehandelt,
Wog' auf Woge schaumend wild,
Seht als Garten ihr behandelt,
Seht ein paradiesisch Bild
Rechts und links in aller Breite
Dichtgedrängt bewohnten Raum

(What cruelly maltreated you, billow on billow foaming madly, now greets you as a garden, a paradisaical picture right and left, far and wide, densely-peopled habitation)

No, I think we are meant to accept this pioneering and colonizing of Faust's at its face value, not perhaps quite at Faust's own estimation, 'the human spirit's masterpiece' ('Des Menschengestes Meisterstück'), but as, at least, a work of widespread and lasting value to the human community.

It is certainly not an impeccably idyllic prospect that is revealed to us: not only are Faust's underlings engaged in piracy ('Man fangt den Fisch, man fangt ein Schiff'—'you catch a fish, you catch a ship'), but Mephisto and the Three Mighty Men, having been ordered to evict Baucis and Philemon from their cottage because that one tract of independent terrain inside his kingdom is spoiling all Faust's pleasure in his work, wilfully bungle the job and burn down the cottage with the old couple and the unfortunate stranger inside it. We believe in the genuineness of Faust's remorse, however, he had provided another cottage for the old folk to move into 'Exchange I wished, not robbery'.

The commentator's task is now much simpler, as regards both this scene and the rest of the play. The reclamation of land from the sea and the growth, there, of a community of working-people who are turning the sea's unfruitfulness into fruitful soil: all this belongs to the kind of symbolism that is valid and that can be related back, carefully nonetheless, to the theme of 'moral action' enunciated at the very outset of the *First Part*. This, with what happens in the next scene, is in fact the *conclusion*. It is not a 'simple' conclusion, any more than the Philemon-Baucis incident was simply idyllic. Faust has developed out of the stormy, wrong-headed and aimlessly yearning romanticism of his middle-age (no, not his youth—he spent that alone with his books of 'philosophy,

law and medicine ') into a competent and energetic organiser and leader of men Not a wise old Socrates, nor yet a Napoleon, and certainly not a Sir Thomas More his activities are far from purely noble and good He does not quite fit in—as we have been getting ready to find out for some time past—with the calm thesis of the Lord

Wenn er mi jetzt auch nur verworren dient,
So werd' ich ihn bald in die Klarheit fuhren
Weiss doch der Gartner, wenn das Baumchen grunt,
Dass Bluth' und Frucht die künft'gen Jahre zieren

(Though at present his service is confused, soon I shall lead him into clarity For the gardener knows, when the young tree shows green, that blossom and fruit will grace the future years)

For Goethe's attitude on morality and the active useful life has become less absolute than it was he, too, has experienced much of human life (as Privy Councillor in Weimar, for instance) and he has discovered that, in practice, the individual's choice is sometimes not between 'right doing' and 'wrong doing' but between a greater and a lesser evil In the terms of the symbol, Faust's choice was between the greater evil of passively accepting the 'barren kingdom' of the waves and the lesser evil of matters such as the death of Philemon and Baucis and the piratical doings of Mephisto and his minions—that certain licence which, in the achievement of great and permanent works, must sometimes be allowed to the powers of evil But, as emphatically as possible, I must deny that this implies any moral or artistic disintegration on the author's part it is simply concomitant on that constant effort to bring his theme out of the philosopher's study and into the arena of actual human living which Goethe makes all through his larger works Such an effort involves not only a continual statement of moral apothegms but also a continual modification of those apothegms as it were, a sustained adjustment of the moralist's or philosopher's pronouncements to the ever-appearing limitations of human nature and the complexities immediately born of activity within a community

In spite of its dubious associations, the term 'practical moralist' will shed a certain light on the nature of Goethe's moral pre-occupations It may perhaps help to explain why Goethe's epigrams are sometimes mutually contradictory the true 'practical moralist' is always learning, and his ethical maxims will tend to be neat summings-up of particular situations, all of them qualifying each other, few of them intended for categorical imperatives And, after all, this careful and thoughtful tolerance comes as no bolt from the blue, we saw how deeply it coloured his treatment of the Gretchen-tragedy Defending him against any possible charge of moral laxity in that matter I quoted that very moving proposition,

How could man live at all if he did not give absolution every night to himself and all his brothers?

It seemed to me, then, that the implication was 'use every man after his desert, and who should 'scape whipping?' But now I wonder if it is not a simple rather than a rhetorical question—if it has not this second, more searching, implication—how, in a single world, *can* we live at all without in some way harming some of our brothers? Life, Goethe says so plainly through the whole *Faust*, is a constant unrelenting struggle, and in a struggle someone is bound to get hurt. But, still there, is the suggestion that, since this is so, we must make sure that, when we struggle, we struggle upwards (and not along Mephisto's downward path) so that the good we are free to do may outweigh the incidental evil we must do. The evil performed directly or indirectly by Faust in the struggle to create a living empire out of 'drown'd lands' is essentially *incidental*. Boswell described himself as having 'all Dr Johnson's principles, with some degree of relaxation'. I think this quite accurately describes the difference between Faust as we see him now and the 'perfected' Faust visualised and prophesied by the Lord in the *Prologue in Heaven*.

MIDNIGHT

With a very effective return to the simple dramatic devices employed in the *First Part*, Goethe follows this scene of Faust in remorse with the foreboding visitation of the 'four grey Hags' heralds of Death. Want, Guilt and Need cannot reach Faust—he is a wealthy man. But nothing can keep out Care. The ensuing dialogue between Care and Faust is a model of strict and telling economy, and in its impact on the reader it has a persuasive force which, after all that has preceded it in the *Second Part*, is amazing. Faust's end is linked with his so-distant 'beginning'—the larger theme disappears almost as if it had never existed, and Goethe reaches back into the past and picks up the tenuous dim threads stretching from the *First Part* with an unerring swiftness which is, perhaps, the most surprising thing in this very surprising work. It is as if the poet's illuminating vision, having ranged at will over so wide and so curiously populated an area, suddenly contracts itself into a pin-point of intense light focussed on the (now) very human figure of Faust, old and lonely, trapped in his palace by the one phantom that can destroy him.⁸ And now Faust's strength is presented just as convincingly as was his weakness in the earlier stages of the play. Soliloquising to himself before Care enters he echoes the desire expressed in the *Easter Morning* scene of the *First Part*, in a fine passage beginning

⁸Cf 'Die Sorge nistet gleich im tiefen Herzen' ('Care nests in the heart's core instantly') in the first soliloquy, after the Wagner interlude. Then, Faust gave in to Care without a fight

Noch hab' ich mich ins Freie nicht gekampft
 Konnt' ich Magie von meinen Pfad entfernen,
 Die Zaubersprüche ganz und gar verleinen,
 Stund' ich, Natur! vor dir ein Mann allein,
 Da war's der Muhe werth, ein Mensch zu sein

(I haven't won into the open yet If only I could remove
 all magic from my path, forget entirely all these spells,
 and stand before you, Nature, merely a man! Then to
 be a man would be worth while)

But, despite his awareness of past mistakes, he refuses to believe
 that Care has any real power over him

Ich bin nur durch die Welt gerannt,
 Ein jed' Gelust ergriff ich bei den Haaren,
 Was nicht genugte, liess ich fahren,
 Was mir entwischte, liess ich ziehan
 Ich habe nur begehrt und nur vollbracht
 Und abermals gewünscht und so mit Macht
 Mein Leben durchgesturmt, erst gross und mächtig,
 Nun aber geht es weise, geht bedächtig
 Der Erdenkreis ist mir genug bekannt
 Nach druben ist die Aussicht uns verrannt,
 Thor, wer dorthin die Augen blinzend richtet,
 Sich über Wolken seines Gleichen dichtet!
 Er stehe fest und sehe hier sich um,
 Dem Tüchtigen ist diese Welt nicht stumm
 Was brauch' er in die Ewigkeit zu schweifen!
 Was er erkennt, lasst sich ergreifen
 Er wandle so den Erdentag entlang,
 Wenn Geister spuken, geh' er seinen Gang
 Im Weiterschreiten find' er Qual und Gluck,
 Er, unbefriedigt jeden Augenblick!

(I have only raced through the world, whatever I desired
 I seized by the hair—what didn't please me I let fall, what
 eluded me I let escape I only desired, I only accom-
 plished, then wished again, and so stormed through my
 life by force, at first masterfully and mightily, but now
 I move prudently, and thoughtfully I realise earth's
 sphere is enough The vision upwards is barred to us,
 Fool, who turns his dazzled eyes that way, poetising about
 his equals above the clouds! Let him stand firm and look
 around him here, this world is not dumb to the man of
 ability What need has he to soar into the infinite! What
 he perceives let him comprehend, thus passing through
 his mortal days When phantoms haunt him, let him go
 his way finding in onward-striding both happiness and
 pain, he, uncontented every moment!)

No longer aspiring to a god-like isolation, he renounces all the 'privileges' of magic—encountering the spectre he warns himself at once, 'Nimm dich in Acht und sprich kein Zauberwort!' ('Be careful now, pronounce no magic word!')—and willingly admits his humanity for this is what it means to be a man with men

Damonen, weiss ich, wird man schwerlich los,
Das geistig-strenge Band ist nicht zu trennen,
Doch deine Macht, O Sorge, schleichend gross,
Ich werde sie nicht anerkennen

(We can hardly break loose from daemons, I know, the rigorous spirit-bond may not be severed, and yet your might, O Care, insidiously strong, I shall never acknowledge)

Thereupon Care breathes upon him and makes him blind, but immediately he rushes out to supervise the final stages of his work of reconstruction. Stawell and Dickinson suggest that this 'blinding' of Faust is 'an inevitable result, for a man of his character, of his resistance to the paralysing influence of Care', but ingenious as this is, I do not think there is sufficient evidence to support it. Faust was most truly (and obviously) blind—blind to the potentialities of life within the human boundaries—in the days when he did *not* resist Care, when in fact he took an inordinate amount of pleasure in relating his cares to his melancholy friend the moon. Faust is now an old man, about to die in any case when the phantom finds it can do nothing more serious to him, it makes him blind—an act of empty revenge. And then the intensity of his belief in useful activity is impressed even more strongly upon us when we see that his first thought is still for the welfare of his settlers. From impotently bewailing the limitations and disabilities of the human spirit, Faust has so far developed that now he is able to conquer the limitations and disabilities of the human body.

There is just one other point to be mentioned in connection with these self-revelatory speeches of Faust's. This—the way in which Faust continues to avoid using the terms of the Lord's wager with Mephisto—may cause some readers to overlook the all-important linking of Faust's final condition with the heavenly pronouncements of the Lord. Faust's autobiographical reflections are eminently sane and their practical wisdom (*Lebensweisheit* one might call it) is beyond doubt, but it cannot be said that he *sees* his life as a moral struggle. Yet is it an idle paradox to suggest that as Faust comes to lead a more and useful life, an increasingly honourable life, so will his conscious preoccupation with moral and philosophical questions steadily decline? Experience tends to show, I think, that those who are most loquacious about the 'right path' only too often spend their days merely sitting on the fence. The terms of Faust's own 'summing-up' do not coincide with those of the Lord's prognosis because Faust is an active being who must

limit his attention to the task in hand, whereas the Lord is the Divine Moralist who sees, and speaks, *sub specie aeternitatis*. Though the terminology may not be identical, Faust's salvation will prove that no disparity exists that cannot be bridged by divine forgiveness.

THE PALACE COURTYARD

Faust is so completely taken up with his work that he mistakes the sound of the Lemures digging his grave for that of his work in progress. Is this an ironic touch? 'Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.' Mephisto certainly enjoys the joke. 'Aus dem Palast ins enge Haus, So dumm lauft es am Ende doch hinaus' ('From palace to narrow house, thus stupidly it comes to an end'). But it is Mephisto, in his complacent assurance of victory—

In jeder Art seid ihr verloren,—
Die Elemente sind mit uns verschworen,
Und auf Vernichtung lauft's hinaus

(You are lost in every way—the elements are sworn to us, and all will end in annihilation)—

who is the target for the irony of this scene. In spite of his cynical aside, we notice how smartly he answers to Faust's brisk 'Overseer!' And Faust's speech—his very last—which, concerned with the last touches to his work, is free of all but the most practical and (indeed) sociological moralising, clinches the respect which this act has won for him in so short a space. It needs copious quotation, more for its revelation of Faust's final ideals than for the notorious trick-phrase which deceives Mephisto into a premature assumption of victory.

Ein Sumpf zieht am Gebirge hin,
Verpestet alles schon Errungne,
Den faulen Pfuhl auch abzuziehn,
Das Letzte war' das Hochsterrungne
Eroffn' ich Raume vielen Millionen,
Nicht sicher zwar, doch thatig frei zu wohnen
Grun das Gefilde, fruchtbar, Mensch und Heerde
Sogleich behaglich auf der neusten Erde,
Gleich angesiedelt an des Hügels Kraft,
Den aufgewalzt kuhn-emsige Volkerschaft
Nur der verdient sich Freiheit wie das Leben,
Der taglich sie erobern muss
Und so verbringt, umrungen von Gefahr,
Hier Kindheit, Mann und Greis sein tuchtig Jahr
Solch ein Gewimmel mocht' ich sehn,
Auf freiem Grund mit freiem Volke stehn
Zum Augenblicke durft' ich sagen
Verweile doch, du bist so schon!
Es kann die Spur von meinen Erdetagen

Nicht in Aeonen untergehn!—
 Im Vorgefuhl von solchem hohen Gluck
 Genuess' ich jetzt den höchsten Augenblick

(A marsh lies about the mountains, infecting all that's already won, to drain the putrid swamp, as well then the last-gained would be the highest gain I have opened up space for many millions to inhabit, not in security, admittedly, but in free activity Green the fields, and fruitful, men and herds straightway at home upon the new soil, settled at once on the hill's strength, built up by the daunt, industrious peoples He alone deserves liberty, as life, who has to win it every day And thus, hemmed in by perils, childhood, manhood and old age shall pass their able years I'd gladly see such swarming crowds, and stand on a free soil with a free people To that moment I'd cry But stay, you are so fair! Aeons cannot obliterate the traces of my mortal days!—in anticipation of so sublime a happiness I enjoy the finest moment, now)

Comparing this with the wager as proposed in the Study Scene of the *First Part*—

Werd' ich zum Augenblicke sagen
 Verweile doch! du bist so schon!
 Dann magst du mich in Fesseln schlagen,
 Dann will ich gern zu Grunde gehn!

(When I cry to the moment But wait, you are so fair!—
 then you may throw me into chains, then will I gladly
 perish!)

we see that Mephisto has over-reached himself Faust is not expressing his satisfaction with the *present* moment—only with some hypothetical future moment which, in view of the unending warfare which his people must wage against the encroaching sea (as he explicitly tells us in this last speech), we may be sure would never come *Im Vorgefuhl* in anticipation, and only in anticipation, can he enjoy this unalloyed contentment Whatever we may think about the dubious activities which have occupied so much of the *Second Part*, we are bound to agree that Faust and the Lord have won their wager quite fairly, not by a mere verbal quibble The moral statement is, here, unambiguous Evil is no irresistible, inexorable force, for human activity—in which it seems most at home—is nevertheless the keenest weapon to turn against it

Though at this moment 'Faust sinks back, the Lemures catch him and lay him on the ground', the rest of the scene does not collapse into anti-climax the old Mephisto is most impressively resurrected and, furthermore, related directly back to the Mephisto of the *Prologue in Heaven*

'Da ist's vorbei!' Was ist daran zu lesen?
 Es ist so gut, als war' es nicht gewesen,
 Und treibt sich doch im Kreis, als wenn es ware
 Ich hebte mir dafür das Ewig-Leere

('And so it's over!' What are we to gather from that?
 It's as good as if it had never existed, and yet it runs
 round in circles as if it *were* I'd rather have eternal
 emptiness myself)

And, in spite of his lengthy complaint about the difficulties of snaring the soul 'these days', Hell with its 'horrible jaws' is very real, very present. The ancient Protagonist is spectacularly resurgent, and that element of suspense which animated the beginning of the Faust-story returns again, at its end. Even the struggle for Faust's soul in which Mephisto's devils mass against the attacking angels avoids the ridiculous.

Mephisto's contemptuous reference to the latter contains a rather neat recapitulation of his significance for humanity (you can very easily relate it back to the Lord's comment on Mephisto, 'the spirit of denial'). And it hints at the reason behind Goethe's 'tolerance'

Ihr wisst, wie wir in tiefverruchten Stunden
 Vernichtung sannen menschlichem Geschlecht
 Das Schandlichste, was wir erfunden,
 Ist ihrer Andacht eben recht

(You know how, in hours most infamous, we planned the
 destruction of the human race—the most shameful thing
 we contrived is just right for their devotion)

The 'most shameful thing' was, of course, the crucifixion of Christ. Thus, Goethe would seem to say, not only may the minor evils which Faust must condone in the course of his significant work be tolerated (there is no question of them being held up to praise), but even that most profound evil of Christ crucified has ultimately created a great religion whose qualities of penetrance and ubiquity might never have been achieved otherwise. But this moralising of mine is intolerably clumsy beside the sparse text which provokes it, the moral suggestion, in this case, is all the more cogent for being placed in Mephisto's mouth—out of the jaws of Hell. Another subtle twist given to the situation (here as in the *First Part*) lies in Mephisto's inability to grasp the ultimate implications of what he is complaining of or sneering at.

There is no call to worry over the theatrical manner in which Mephisto and his hordes are foiled. We have already learnt that the former is not altogether invulnerable to the stings of lust, besides the deplorable incident with the Lamiae, he has outlined *his* idea of a great work—a harem in a landscape-garden.

denn ein für allemal
Denk' ich die Schönen im Plural

(once for all, I think of the Fair Sex in the plural)

and so his lecherous appreciation of the choring angels ('sexless' though they are), the cause of his downfall, does not astonish us unduly. It is simply an entertaining device for showing us his villainous discomfiture and allowing him to make an appropriate hair-tearing exit. Mephisto's real defeat has taken place earlier.

MOUNTAIN RAVINES, FOREST, CLIFF, WILDERNESS

The play is over, but we must submit, just once more, to the poet's fertile imagination and his love of huge pictorial canvases.

You will admit that the conclusion, where the redeemed soul is carried up, was difficult to manage, and that, among such supersensual, scarcely conceivable things, I might easily have lost myself in the void, had I not given my poetic vision a desirable form and substance by the use of clearly-defined figures and conceptions borrowed from the Christian Church.⁹

This progress to Heaven must be received in a spirit of not-too-solemn appreciation. Suffice it to say that the roving lyric moves along the mountainside from *Pater ecstaticus* to *Pater profundus*, to *Pater Seraphicus*, to *Doctor Marianus*, gradually swelling into an adoration of the 'höchste Herrscherin der Welt', the Blessed Virgin. We notice the touching echo, in the Penitent's lovely song, 'Neige, neige, Du Ohne-gleiche', of Gretchen's so different prayer to the *Mater dolorosa*, 'Ach neige, Du Schmerzenreiche'. And then this great work, born from the puppet-fable of Faust that 'murmured with many voices in my soul', ends with those famous (though usually misunderstood) lines,

Das Ewig-Weibliche
Zieht uns hinan

(the Eternal-Womanly lifts us above)

The 'Eternal-Womanly' is a good deal more than a reference to Gretchen's intercession on Faust's behalf, it is, I believe, a culminating eulogy of the Blessed Virgin, who in turn is the symbol of divine love and forgiveness. The figure of the Virgin is so powerfully significant in this epilogue that the reader may perhaps wonder what has happened to the less ritualistic Lord of the *Prologue in Heaven*. But the final note in this vast symphonic work is one of forgiveness. there is always a margin for forgiveness at the end.

⁹Eckermann's *Conversations*

of the last act I think the finest lines, and the most relevant, of this 'holy masquerade' are those spoken by the *Doctor Marianus*

In die Schwachheit hingerafft,
Sind sie schwer zu retten,
Wer zerreisst aus eigner Kraft
Der Gelüste Ketten?

(Swept away into frailty, they are difficult to rescue, who ever rends lust's chains by his own strength?)

And who could be a more persuasive symbol for the Lord's mercy—for the gardener's readiness to spare even those trees which have borne ambiguous fruit—than the Virgin? Though there is such a vast difference of tone between the play's beginning and its end, between the simple protestant *Prologue in Heaven* and the rich catholic 'Journey to Heaven', I do not think it is invalid interpretation to find a link, however finely-spun, between the blunt optimism of the Lord and the pure unselfish love with which the Virgin irradiates this closing sequence

Certainly, if the epilogue has not this kind of significance it can have no other, since the preceding scenes have done all that is necessary in relating Faust's end to his beginning, and done it with magnificent economy and ease *their* significance is unmistakable

D J ENRIGHT

COMMENTS AND REVIEWS

Explorations Essays in Criticism, Mainly on the Seventeenth Century, by L C Knights (Chatto & Windus, 10/6) Following *Scrutiny* practice, this book by an editor will not receive further notice in these pages

Humanitas A Quarterly Review Published by the Editors for the University Union, Manchester 15 Price 2/6 All who think (a view finding notable support in a large proportion of the pages following this note) that the function of a university badly needs asserting will welcome this undertaking, in which teachers and students co-operate, to assert it in an appropriate way There should be wide and practical encouragement

PLANNING YOUR LIFE AT THE UNIVERSITY

FIRST YEAR AT THE UNIVERSITY, by Bruce Truscot
(Faber, 4/6)

'May I say that this book is being written, not primarily for Major Scholars and people holding the Higher Certificate with distinctions, but for more ordinary undergraduates who were not particularly distinguished at school?' The author hopes that the 'average man' will read his guide before leaving school and meditate the practical and utilitarian advice he gives during the Long Vacation before going up. He will probably, the author assumes, have read or be going to read *Red Brick University*, so we may take it that the author is primarily addressing prospective students of the 'modern' universities, and in particular, students in the Faculty of Arts, though, of course, much of what he says applies equally well to students in other faculties and undergraduates at other universities.

The author takes a depressing view of the sense of responsibility and the capacity for independent thought of average Sixth Form boys, but as his experience apparently extends over at least 30 years, we must suppose that he has good grounds for offering the most elementary advice of a kind I should have thought that even a poor average scholar could hardly have failed to pick up in his last two years at school. Indeed the offensively 'American' tone of the whole book suggests that, at least as far as the modern universities are concerned, the difference in level between American and English institutes of higher learning is not great enough any longer to justify the use of 'American' as an epithet of pejorative distinction.

What will be the effect of the author's attitude on these average readers, whether they will take it lying down as appropriate to a superior kind of Head Master 'half-obscured in clouds of academic majesty', or whether they will murmur

Do not let me hear

Of the wisdom of old men, but rather of their folly

can for the present reviewer only provide matter for idle speculation. The reasons for noticing this book lie elsewhere.

When Mr Knights reviewed *Red Brick University* he was inclined to give the author the benefit of the doubt: the book, after all, was full of good things and moved, as far as it went, in the right direction. The interest of this latest book is accordingly that it puts some matters beyond all doubt and 'places' its author in an unmistakable way. For it provides an answer to the first questions we must put in one form or another to anyone who comes forward with a plan for the guidance of youth: is his conception of ends a worthy one? Is his grasp of civilized values firm? Does

he know in an immediate way what the good life is? The answers to these questions usually come indirectly and we in turn judge them satisfactory or pronounce them unsatisfactory by the light of our own conception, grasp and immediate knowledge. That we have to do here with a crude, oversimplified, insufficiently *liberal* point of view is my conviction after reading the author's final chapter on 'Ideals' and using the severest standards I can command, as the author would wish. For he may be talking to average students, but he does not wish to offer them an average ideal or even a more-than-average ideal which would be open to such criticism. Yet what he offers and the way in which he offers it lack the fineness, the subtlety, the genuinely humane note we expect of the modern Chiron, the ripe scholar in the Humanities. Indeed he reminds me rather of the efficient business manager of a factory turning out one and only one make of car addressing those just entering on junior posts in the firm.

In passing judgments of this kind no reviewer can expect to be taken on trust. So the author must be given space to reveal himself fairly to the reader who can then if he is not convinced put the reviewer in *his* place and dismiss the case. The author opens his chapter on ideals with a description of a painting which 'represented two people walking down a straight road, bordered on either side by a double row of poplars. At the extreme end of the road was a building—a church or a large house of some kind'. It struck the author as 'a representation of the efficient, satisfying life, and of the university life in particular'. He then writes

'On an earlier page I hinted that you should think of yourself, at the beginning of your course, as starting off along a straight road, at the end of which is your degree examination, and try not to stray from the road except for short periods and for a worth-while reason. And now I am suggesting that you should think of your whole life as a straight road, make quite certain that you can distinguish your goal at the end of it, and never once stray from the road, for any purpose whatsoever'

'You must be a *practical* idealist', he tells his young reader, and warns him to be prepared to meet with ridicule and contempt. The ridicule and contempt are, however, not thought of as coming from those whose ideal is finer and less 'stream-lined', but from *cynics*. The author reassures the young idealist that 'the undergraduate cynic seldom makes good in adult life'. He gives examples of their melancholy fates. Practical idealism, on the other hand, can point to its successes.

'The unobtrusive freshman whose devotion to work called forth scathing jests is a barrister at the head of his profession. The athlete who found time on his way home from college to look in at the S.C.M. prayer-meeting began his post-university career by captaining England and ended by becoming one of the most business-like of our Bishops. The short-sighted little

man who was bent on making his mark at the Union never did—but his persistence availed him in another field and at fifty he was Chairman of half-a-dozen companies'

The book ends as follows

'Once you have taken stock of yourself and of your future, set about planning your life at the university, both for the three or four years considered as a whole and for the individual session, term, week, and day. First and foremost, as you will have gathered, comes the integration of your character, temperament and vital interests (religion, friendships, studies, hobbies, etc.) into one whole. Make every day an integrated day. Get up alert and ready for whatever is coming. As you dress, think over the twelve or fourteen hours that lie before you. Plan them so that work, exercise, and relaxation play their respective parts, but no hour, no minute is wasted. When the day is over, don't potter, don't idle, but go straight to bed, ready for the business of the night, which is neither reading, nor thinking, nor planning, but refreshing, dreamless sleep'

That this is a business ethic will be conceded in one sense, if in no other. I mean that it is couched in the language which business men speak—I judge from advertisements and 'pep' talks. There is a good deal in the book which reminds one of Taylor's factory reforms and time-saving methods. Take this, for example

'The things I most want to tell you are things you might not think of yourself, and the chief of those, as regards time, is that by gathering up odd fragments of it you can save much more than you could ever think possible. You can write a cheque or a postcard while you wait for a meal, you can look up a reference in the library between two lectures, you can repeat or revise some passage of verse or rule of syntax in a bus, or even in a bus queue. It's no exaggeration to say that on each working day most students could save an hour which would otherwise be sheer loss, and that, assuming a six-day week and six weeks' holiday a year, means about five additional weeks of eight-hour days. It's really worth thinking about, isn't it?'

The author's aim is to help the average man gradually to pass 'from the mental muddle you live in now to a perfectly working forty-hour-week plan of a hundred per cent efficiency'. Not only will 'efficient organization' guarantee you a good Second in an Honours degree, 'the habit of organization soon becomes second nature'. The author's tips, if followed up conscientiously, certainly make for an efficient, if not for a satisfying, life. 'Provided you keep close and true to your ideals, you will find there is nothing soulless about planning, whereas in a life which is no more than a jungle ideals very easily get lost'. Thus we are brought back to the question of the ideals which determine the principles of organization. A different kind of organization—but no less

'efficient'—was required to turn out Mr Sturt's 'products' than was needed for Mr Ford's. A full time-table and a full life are not necessarily the same things. The average student would do well to turn first to the last chapter of this book where he will obtain light on what the author means by phrases such as 'the deeper kind of education'. He can then draw his own conclusions when he finds he is advised to 'organize your outside interests exactly as you organize your work'.

If the reform of the 'modern' universities is going to be carried out in the spirit of this book, readers interested in reform should pay particular attention to what the author has to say about examinations. His views on this topic also throw further light (if needed) on his general outlook. Examinations, he says, are both a test of and an important formative influence on character. 'A man who can tackle his degree examination serenely is likely to come well out of a lesson with an unruly class, an interview for an important job or an address given to an unexpectedly large audience'. 'Despite exceptions which prove the rule, there is some connection between failure in life and failure in examinations'.

He advises the freshman not to listen to people 'who set up a kind of opposition between working for examinations and "real education"'. And he assures his readers that 'good or bad, you will get what you deserve'. 'In a whole generation of experience, I can recall only one undergraduate who I now think was placed in the wrong class of Honours'. This is partly due to the fact that 'Examiners are seldom taken in by the unsound and showy candidate with the fluent pen, and still less by the unintelligent crammer with a flair for spotting questions'. Elsewhere he says that such spotting is seldom possible. 'Only intelligence plus application will win a First, so don't fear that facile cleverness will carry off undeserved prizes at the expense of honest merit'.

A further point of interest to the reformer has already been dealt with by Mr Knights. It is the author's contention that the university is primarily a research institute. In this book, if I have understood him correctly, the author claims that universities actually began as research institutes. 'What, then, were the universities founded to discover? The answer is Fresh knowledge'. He describes the foundation of a model *studium generale* with fifty members. 'Each of these *socii* is engaged upon his particular little plot of research'.

But where I should like to go further than Mr Knights is in combating the author's contention that the function of the university is primarily to pursue knowledge for its intrinsic worth. Knowledge for its own sake, *i.e.*, any knowledge is not an absolute value. Knowledge is only valuable in relation to man's needs and interests. Knowledge which serves no purpose, and I mean no purpose at all, not merely no practical purpose, has no value. The reader may recall a review in this journal by D W Harding of a Mass-Observation survey, *May the Twelfth*, which proposed, 'Out of the many possible studies of the Coronation crowds, it seems worth

while attempting to list the uses to which they put paper. Paper was used in ' Mr Harding commented, 'The main objection to ideas such as these is not that they are presented half-baked, nor that they are bumptious, but simply that they are not sufficiently interesting'

H A MASON

CLIO ELEVATED, OR THE SPIRIT OF ENGLISH HISTORY

THE SPIRIT OF ENGLISH HISTORY, by A L Rowse
(Jonathan Cape, 7/6)

Mr Rowse's book belonged, one had told oneself, to a war-time literary movement, and, having escaped notice in these pages, might—in spite of the author's academic status as a historian—be allowed to remain so belonging. Actually, it has a current significance, as its repeated re-issue suggests—the last coinciding with the appearance of an aid to self-education proffered by Mr Rowse under the title of *The Use of History*.

The use of *The Spirit of English History*? Mr Rowse's dedication runs 'To The Right Honourable Winston S Churchill, Historian, Statesman, Saviour Of His Country'. There is also a reference to 'a deep satisfaction' on the part of the author 'that at such a fateful moment (1943) the nation has found a leader of the uttermost courage, whose vision is rooted in a historic sense of our past'. These, of course, are preliminary courtesies. But the attitude and tone are not reserved for one personality: they are, in what follows, directed towards a whole continent. The author was not content, as have been some others, to make the best of the British Empire and panegyrise the English nation with an eye only to the home public. His references to America, notably those concerning the *rightness* of the British defeat in the American War of Independence and the withdrawal of the U S A from the League of Nations, represented as a 'derangement rather than as a world catastrophe', leave no doubt as to the audience in mind. Even the imperialist apologetics—'Britain was forced to defend her economic and strategic interests by formally annexing territories where her influence had long been paramount'—she became possessed, still with reluctance, of a vast new empire'—is not irrelevant here, the more so as Mr Rowse is obviously not laughing up his sleeve. The ability to celebrate, simply, the rise of Indian population from one to four hundred million during the British Raj as 'a marvellous achievement' is notable.

There are sections dealing with national and/or racial characteristics. We, the English-British, are 'imprecise', 'subtly various', 'instinctively sympathetic', 'kindly', 'tolerant' and 'culturally fertile'. The original Britons were 'a feminine people' and the Saxons 'earthy, laborious and stolid' a virile, mascu-

line stock' 'To this amalgam'—since masculine and feminine elements have been mentioned, 'marriage' would have been metaphorically more suitable—'the Danes and Norse added another element, they were more electric and vital with a passionate feeling for independence' Rhetorical questions suggest themselves What of the Danegeld which the 'masculine' Saxons paid, of the submission to Canute and of the defeat of the English at the hands of 'not more than five thousand knights' under William the Bastard? But, says Mr Rowse, the 'English'—and to speak of 'English' before the Norman conquest seems hardly accurate—'had something easy-going, kindly, slack, about them' And so on

Mr Rowse, besides being vague on racial origins and rather contradictory on national characteristics shows other evidence of a certain narveté His praise of the U S A runs parallel with a deep dislike, very proper to 1943, of everything that is connoted by the word 'German' Most people will be surprised, though perhaps not as pleased as Mr Rowse would like to think, to know that their racial constitution is 'a great deal nearer to that of France than it is to that of Germany' They will wonder in what sense, if any, the Entente Cordiale was 'a return to our historic tradition', since France was, for close on a thousand years, regarded as the hereditary enemy, and they certainly may be pardoned for smiling sarcastically at the remark that 'it was long before we learned the lesson that we (England and France) must stand together or perish separately' Had Mr Rowse forgotten the events of 1940?

Mr Rowse's social predilections are a little difficult to follow, various aristocracies, gentries, middle classes and industrial magnates competing for favourable mention It is noticeable, however, that the 'lower orders' and 'industrial masses', once they have ceased to be the sturdy yeomanry and peasantry of the Hundred Years War period, get short shrift The 'Agricultural Revolution' left a large class of landless labourers Fortunately (sic) for them, the concurrent development of industry absorbed them, with some ups and downs of adjustment' This is *litotes* with a vengeance (How interestingly Mr Rowse has developed since the tough Leftism of *Politics and the Younger Generation*!)

Mr Rowse adumbrates through implication what may be termed the Doctrine of Historical Inevitability, alias the Logic of History The peculiar nature of this principle is, first that it is perceptible only after the lapse of centuries, thus partaking of the nature of wisdom after the event, and second that it gives comfort by proving that what happened had to happen and that it was right that it should happen For instance, it was 'promising for the future' that the 'marriage' of the temperamentally dissimilar 'Britons' and 'Saxons' should take place—though the nuptials were rather blood-stained, it 'lay in the logic of history' 'that the Normans should provide Britain with a governing military caste', the Norman Conquest though 'a catastrophe for the English at the time' was 'ultimately far-reaching and beneficent in its effects' There was

'something inevitable' about the Reformation, Elizabeth's war with Spain was 'probably inevitable', 'it was inevitable that the Americans should have the reality of independence' In the American War of Independence 'we were defeated and rightly' 'there were many predisposing factors which made it inevitable, when one looks back, that the Industrial Revolution should have come about first in this country' The desire to justify the *status quo* is very touching and calculated to comfort the dead millions whose present bliss was sacrificed for the ungrateful felicity of future generations One wonders is Mr Rowse's prophecy for the future as positive and as comforting as his prolepsis on the past? Or does the inevitability of American priority in the Atomic Revolution disquiet him?

Evidently the spirit of English history is a potent brew If it intoxicates the addict into a rose-coloured world where, all being right, God's in his heaven, it also blunts the fine edge of the critical faculty, unsteadies the legs and blears the eye It confuses what was with what might have been and what is with what ought to be In the hands of the audience for which it was intended it can have undesirable effects with its insistence on nationalism in various guises as a touchstone of development From the point of view of a professional historian, surely the desirable uses of history demand that historians should not allow their enthusiasm to get the better of their discrimination?

A J WOOLFORD

MR LEWIS'S THEOLOGY

THE GREAT DIVORCE, by C S Lewis (Geoffrey Bles The Centenary Press, 7/6)

When Mr Lewis's literary criticism has had attention in this periodical it has been understood to show incomprehension, or rather evasion, of the peculiar questions arising from those works which, rightly or wrongly, engage contemporary interest Mr Lewis's adjustment to facts of literary politics or fashion, as they may be considered, has been thought representative of a more persistent and deep-rooted hostility, in minds set by certain effects of academic education, to any reformation of habitual attachments or practices The versatility of this author, and his success in non-literary modes, lead one to expect more pronounced expressions of this attitude in his other works something similar can be illustrated, but the whole constitution of his apologetical writings cannot be so simply described The principal fact in explanation is that he has here submitted himself, and is directly and diligently attending, to an object of more definitive and intransigent quality than literature—that is, traditional Christian natural and moral theology, and its restatement for contemporary readers In the prior consideration he has taken all pains to be faithful, with the result that it would be futile to impugn his formal and specific

orthodoxy This achievement alone has been the immediate cause of his success with a sympathetic audience

No doubt, too, Mr Lewis has been the first to describe Christian beliefs at all coherently for a number of people, in such books as *Christian Behaviour*, *The Problem of Pain*, *Broadcast Talks*, and *Beyond Personality* The popularization practised in these works, which would not normally call for notice in *Scrutiny*, seems comparatively innocuous, in fact *Christian Behaviour*, the most unpretentious, is quite unobjectionable, and, for B B C work, respectably done *Broadcast Talks*, however, displays some of the vices of this kind of simplification—mostly, as often happens, unnecessary colloquialisms, foolishness like ‘these filthy quislings’ (of witches), condonation or exploitation of slackness in language (with ‘decent’ and ‘decency’, for instance), and analogies of the type ‘rules of morality rules of football’, or ‘right and wrong not a matter of mere taste and opinion any more than the multiplication table’ all these attempts to obtain easy assent can only succeed in establishing and fixing agreement on a level far below that desired by the author, and as deceptive and unstable as any ‘mere taste and opinion’ Of similar effect and apparent persuasiveness (especially by their invitation to ignore all cautionary considerations) are these lines

‘What I cannot understand is this sort of half-pacifism you get nowadays which gives people the idea that though you have got to fight, you ought to do it with a long face and as if you were ashamed of it It is that feeling which robs lots of magnificent young Christians in the Services of something they have a right to, something which is the natural accompaniment of war—a kind of gaiety and whole-heartedness’

There is little point in detailing the half-truths of passages like this (but, at least, Mr Lewis the mediaeval scholar should know that as much a Christian virtue as *mirth* was *sadness*, a peculiar habitual sobriety, more properly to be inculcated than the former, which was a fruit, rather than the mode of right conduct) Among the more unfortunate results of his procedure is the endorsement given to intellectual and moral complacency, so that much of the instruction in a new system of concepts provides additional, rather than removing the old, sanctions for undesirable, irrational attitudes This is all the more true when, as I have suggested, the assent is previously there, and so immediately granted, and it is with this public, mainly, that the author’s sleights go unperceived At the least, it is thought (and this minimum is taken for all), in popularization he avoids the most patent chasm of all on the fatal path of ‘making things easy’—that of making the concepts and facts themselves, the dogma, easy—by which way, of course, there go the promoters of agreed syllabuses, Basic Christianity, and World Ethical Religion The trouble is that Mr Lewis is not so conscious of the more insidious temptation to make the *conditions*

of agreement too easy, for the reader and for himself, just as, though aware of the intellectual dangers of indulgence in merely personal speculation, he is not so aware of the indirect temptation to satisfy personal distastes in the course, and at the cost, of authoritative teaching

These tendencies are especially discernible in *The Screwtape Letters*, where, for all the author's special claim to confessional subtlety and knowingness in respect of other consciences, and despite his safeguard 'not all Screwtape says should be assumed to be true even from his own angle', he does not in fact himself renounce any of the usual, less reputable, advantages of putting statements into diabolic mouths with the consequent predisposition of, on the one hand, damnability, or praiseworthiness on the other. In the latter case one finds behind the devilish spokesman the same endorsement of questionable consoling commonplace, to the point of absurdity (I have known a human defended from strong temptations to social ambition by a still stronger taste for tripe and onions'), or greater duplicity.

'The results of such a fanciful hatred are often most disappointing and of all humans the English are in this respect the most deplorable milksops. They are creatures of that miserable sort who loudly proclaim that torture is too good for their enemies and then give tea and cigarettes to the first wounded German who turns up at the back door'

This is rather like something from the pen of a Sunday-newspaper humourist or leader-writer, in defence of the same positions as those held, presumably, by Mr Lewis and his sympathetic public. Most, however, of his energy and feeling is spent 'satirically', in suggested anathematizations of his Enemies. These are interesting to observe, since most have intellectual and literary accidentals, which are distinguished by considerable irrelevance to the didactic statement ostensibly being made—and so betray the strength of the distorting influence. The siding of the devils with congregational, as opposed to parochial organization is exceptional as a direct, if unimportant, challenge to opinion on the religious side, which Mr Lewis depends on enlisting, that the detail for once has escaped attention indicates how completely his audience is tuned to welcome and not question his words. For one explanation of his success is that this guaranteed religious sympathy generally operates, in accordance with the facility of comprehension and assent, with little regard to the means by which it has been obtained, and none at all to the integrity of any other ideas that may by the way be proposed or assumed. To the unsympathetic such cases are plentiful and palpable in his writing—only he forestalls comment by placing it pejoratively (in the mouths of his devils and damned). That provision is I think a further measure of the degree to which his works are really meant for the 'prepared' public—the fact overlooked by his believing admirers, who not

surprisingly find it 'persuasive', 'brilliant' and so on. That is, his proselytizing talent is only ostensible, and if judged by the exigencies of that purpose, very inadequate.

On the secular favours, pretending to appropriateness, worn in the author's religious garments, but which affront the unattached spectator's sight, *Scrutiny's* must dwell. Examples can be listed. One is not surprised to find subscription to superficial reputations (G. B. Shaw, for instance) accompanying irresponsibility in intellectual respects (the 'Historical Point of View' is too easily satirized) to quote an instance (from the diabolic side, it must be remembered).

'There have been sad cases among the modern physicists. If he must dabble in science keep him on economics and sociology, don't let him get away from that valuable "real life".'

Acquaintance with Mr. Lewis's literary criticism and the intense unobjective feeling it quite often manifests on certain topics would prepare one for such a sentence as 'A sermon which such people could accept would be to him as insipid as a poem which they could scan'. That is a well-worn mode of literary polemic, contemptible enough, and the undertone is only representative, but it is very deplorable when it issues in accusations that are, in the strictest sense, unscrupulous, invidious, and scandalous.

'We have done this through the poets and novelists by persuading the humans that a curious and unusually short-lived experience which they call "being in love" is the only respectable ground for marriage, that marriage can and ought to render this excitement permanent, and that a marriage that does not do so is no longer binding.'

'Thus by inflaming the horror of the Same Old Thing we have recently made the Arts, for example, less dangerous to us perhaps than they have ever been, "low-brow" and "high-brow" artists alike now being doubly drawn into fresh, and still fresh excesses of lasciviousness, unreason, cruelty, and pride.'

There is something in this tone akin to that motivating much of the academically-tuned criticism, or the defensive pamphlet, *The Abolition of Man*—the obvious common denominator being resentment of disturbance of habitual channels of feeling. But the moral indignation that always marks the expression of this desperate and stimulated righteousness (its character is always more than literary) is here extremely aggravated, in proportion to the author's evangelistic sanction. Correctness of intention, one can see, does not ensure the integrity of the writing—actual motives are much more influential, even essential, and they cannot be exorcized by considerations of, in sum, social acceptability. How little the author has employed the more important kinds of self-control may be appreciated from his other lapses and excesses, which dramatic assignment cannot palliate.

'Not only a Christian, but such a Christian—a vile, sneaking, simpering, demure, monosyllabic, mouse-like, watery, insignificant, virginal, bread and butter miss. The little brute. She makes me vomit. She strikes and scalds through the very pages of the dossier, filthy insipid little prude—and yet ready to fall into this creature's arms like any other breeding animal'

The Screwtape Letters is the least creditable (and most successful) volume. *The Great Divorce* has fewer and less pronounced examples of the same vices, but the performance of this eschatological vision is just as unsatisfactory as that of the other books—which is to say that it fails, especially as propaganda, for the one necessity of this kind of creation is that it should give the *feeling* of completeness, of comprehending inclusiveness. The publisher says that *The Great Divorce* should be 'disquieting', I doubt whether anyone could find it *satisfying*. The satiric portraits of unredeemed personalities may provide some readers with a certain degree of satisfaction—but it is of a treacherous sort, just as any annoyance caused is of the wrong sort, to the wrong people, because, altogether, they are, morally, entirely *unrevealing*. A quotation will illustrate this deficiency, and also suggest how, again, the author's motives are faulty, his object being, not the definition of specific imperfection (from which Pope's and Bunyan's, as well as Dante's, revelations start), but an effectively recognizable and entertaining combination of social vices—a fair sample of the tone and interest, if the most facile piece, is this

"Do they *like* this place?" I asked

"As much as they'd like anything" he answered
 "They've got cinemas and fish and chip shops and advertisements and all the sort of things they want. The appalling lack of any intellectual life doesn't worry *them*. I realized as soon as I got here that there'd been some mistake. I ought to have taken the first bus but I've fooled about trying to wake people up here. I found a few fellows I'd known before and tried to form a little circle, but they all seem to have sunk to the level of their surroundings. Even before we came here I'd some doubts about a man like Cyril Blellow. I always thought he was working in a false idiom. But he was at least intelligent—one could get some criticism worth hearing from him, even if he was a failure on the creative side. But now he seems to have nothing left but his self conceit. The last time I tried to read him some of my own stuff—but wait a minute, I'd just like you to look at it"

Apart from some fairly secure (being non-personal) remarks on the voluntariness of salvation and damnation, the series of untransformed Ghosts composes the volume, it is notable that the already-saved Spirits are only characterized negatively, and that in the only case of a Ghost being saved, becoming a Spirit (pp 92-3),

the essential explanation is eluded, whereas the attempt at compensating 'suggestion' admits that it doesn't tell very much

'For a moment I could make out nothing distinctly. Then I saw, between me and the nearest bush, unmistakably solid, but growing every moment solidier, the upper arm and the shoulder of a man. Then, brighter still and stonger, the legs and hands. The neck and golden head materialized while I watched, and if my attention had not wavered I should have seen the actual completing of a man—an immense man, naked, not much smaller than the Angel

Giving the 'feel', 'atmosphere' or 'note' of each region or particular spiritual state has always been an important mode of operation of this kind of literature, and none of Mr Lewis's versions are impressive, sometimes their texture is that of fifty modern novels with or without metaphysical pretensions

'I glanced round the bus. Though the windows were closed, and soon muffed, the bus was full of light. It was cruel light. I shrank from the faces and forms by which I was surrounded. They were all fixed faces, full not of possibilities but of impossibilities, some gaunt, some bloated, some glaring with idiotic ferocity, some drowned beyond recovery in dreams, but all, in one way or another, distorted and faded. One had a feeling that they might fall to pieces at any moment if the light grew much stronger. Then—there was a mirror on the end wall of the bus—I caught sight of my own. And still the light grew'

Much the same occurs in Mr Lewis's own novels, which have pretensions beyond my scope and patience, *Out of the Silent Planet*, *Perelandra* (examined to some effect by Alistair Cooke in *The New Republic*, April 24th, 1944), and *That Hideous Strength*

I think, finally, that Mr Lewis is not sufficiently self-conscious to be a good moralist. I have tried to show in several cases that there may be a submission of personal belief without subordination of his own interests, to doctrinal definition. Mr Lewis's books bear no marks of ecclesiastical approbation, in spite of his reported popularity with the clergy of the Roman as well as the English Church, but *censores deputati* might well have his case in mind when they consider, as they do not always do, whether more than formal orthodoxy and primary intentions are involved in the effect of any book, whether any good possibly achieved by direct indoctrination may not often be outweighed and sometimes thwarted by the persistent nourishment of false attitudes, and if unscrutinized proselytizing interests and private motives aren't likely to vitiate the proper objects and intention of such writing, just as much as conspicuous adulteration and adaptation of fact and dogma. Ecclesiastical censorship will at least recognize its responsibility here, there is no acknowledgment, from those with responsible rank in the intellectual hierarchy, of the parallel, but more desperate problems of contemporary 'social education'

Besides, Mr Olaf Stapledon, as a representative moralist and propagandist of rationalism, or humanism, or exploration, is somewhat less presentable than Mr Lewis, who at least has something intellectually respectable behind him, and the elements of wisdom to hand. *Scrutiny* readers ought not to use Mr Lewis's failings to feed their own complacency.

E. K. T. Dock

MIXED CURRENCY

THE MINT: A Miscellany of Literature, Art and Criticism
 Edited by Geoffrey Grigson (Routledge, 8/6)

Someone with the requisite staying-power, sufficient time to spare and easy access to bookshops ought to make a comprehensive survey of the numerous little magazines of literary pretensions which are such a characteristic feature of the contemporary scene. The names of most of the older ones may be found in Mr Denys Val Baker's P. E. N. book, *Little Reviews, 1919-1943*, which attempts something like a history of literary periodicals between the wars. It is largely uncritical and often inaccurate, while its use of the term 'little review' is elastic enough to cover *The Criterion*, but it does nevertheless bring home the fact that there are at present far fewer literary periodicals of any weight or authority than in 1919. What we have instead is a mushroom growth of little magazines and miscellanies hardly to be called reviews—the name ought to imply, one would think, at least some show of a critical policy. These represent small groups more or less out of touch with each other and with any common centre of critical opinion. They are usually defended as at least providing a field for the exercise of new talent, but this plea is seen to be inadmissible when it is realized that in such an atmosphere a new writer achieves a coterie reputation and a market value without ever once coming up against any other standards than those of his group. When the critical periodical performed a real function it defined and made explicit standards and values implicitly acknowledged by the public for which it spoke and over which it exercised its influence and authority. There was a public, there were standards, and there was a common critical idiom. None of these conditions can be assumed to-day, and a serious periodical has to begin by rallying the public that it believes to be potentially available—a task calling for a particularly conscious effort. In practice the coteries usually adopt some eccentric code of their own—political, economic, psychological or merely surrealist—with the appropriate jargon, or they accept without question the latest Bloomsbury fashions as mediated by *Horizon* or *The New Statesman*.

These points have been made often enough in *Scrutiny*, but it is unhappily still necessary to insist on them. Many people regard *Horizon* as the embodiment of modern English culture at its best, and not as a disappointingly unequal magazine which occasionally

publishes an interesting article but which has no real policy or standards beyond fashionable eclecticism and a feeling that culture shouldn't be made to toe the party line. And even Mr Koestler can be surprisingly naive about weekly reviewing.¹ The explorer who takes on the survey suggested will find that reputations are come by as easily in the little reviews as in the Sunday paper advertisements. An extraordinary variety of poets and novelists are assumed to have the status of classics. Mr Warner is considered another Kafka, Mr Dylan Thomas is discussed as if he were on the same level as Yeats, and Mr Mortimer and Mr Connolly are quoted as critical authorities comparable to Mr Eliot.²

The Mint, not a little review but a substantial bound volume, would seem at first sight to offer a welcome exception to the above remarks. It claims to be 'an international miscellany of humanism' 'without being narrow it is not political' and it is to avoid the fashionable expedients and poses. The preface asserts the primacy of 'the literary conscience' and a belief in 'certain timeless over-riding values' 'art implies effort, is not a fashionable aesthetic eclecticism, not a surrender, not a wallow, but a matter of this literary conscience, this conscious control of doing excellently and honestly according to one's powers something big or something small with all the talent and receptivity one has the luck to possess and the duty to develop'. Admirable, one feels, in the abstract, but perhaps a little vague.³ The other explicit aim, to bridge the gap between scholarship and original writing, seems much more questionable. The real problem is rather that both scholarship and original writing have become divorced from criticism.

The table of contents does not reassure us. Martin Buber, W. H. Auden, Seán O'Casey, James T. Farrell, Graham Greene, W. J. Turner, Rhys Davies, Nikolaus Pevsner—the list is certainly miscellaneous enough, and suggests one of the better numbers of *Horizon*. Turning first to the general and critical essays we find that they can be said to share a concern for 'timeless over-riding values' only in the most general sense: we are conscious not so much of common standards as of an uneasy feeling that there ought to be such things. Martin Buber's speech on *The Education of Character* makes some useful points in spite of a Teutonic pretentiousness of style, some of which may be the fault of the translator. Mr West's slapdash essay, *The Precious Myth*, defends the English liberal tradition of the integrity and worth of the individual. He says incidentally some sensible things about French Resistance literature, Palanurus and Mr Koestler, quoting the latter's Philistine advice to the common reader: 'Never force yourself to read a book—it is a wasted effort'. Mr Farrell is on the

¹See the review of *The Yogi and the Commissar* by Mr H. A. Mason in the last number of *Scrutiny*.

²'Three of our best critics', says a recent writer in *The Times Literary Supplement*, referring to Mr Mortimer, Mr Connolly and Virginia Woolf.

side of the angels against the commercial culture represented by Hollywood, his article is sound but long-winded. Mr Salmon discusses the decadence of spoken English and the possibility of its re-creation through broadcasting. Mr Barfield's attempt to re-value the Psalms contains several references to the doctrines of Rudolf Steiner and some disconcerting lapses into sheer vulgarity. 'The Law, with all its severity, was not Katisha to the righteous Jew, it was Yum-Yum herself'. The more scholarly articles are interesting but they have a somewhat marginal significance. Professor Hausermann of Geneva traces the changes in Yeats's idea of Shelley at different stages of his own career. Mr Grigson contributes a long and rather diffuse essay on William Barnes which has considerable interest but tends to waste time on such side-issues as Barnes's use of technical devices from Persian, Hebrew and Welsh poetry. There are also some hitherto unpublished poems and fragments by Clare.

The one contribution on the visual arts, *The Architecture of Mannerism*, by Mr Pevsner, is a solid and well-illustrated piece of art-history amplifying and developing certain points made in his *Outline of European Architecture* in the Pelican series.³

The doubts raised by the critical essays are more than confirmed by the original work. Auden's four poems show him still performing all his tricks, with the usual defensive ironies and ambiguities. Sometimes one wonders whether he is deliberately insulting the reader's intelligence.

Once we could have made the docks,
Now it is too late to fly,
Once too often you and I
Did what we should not have done,
Round the rampant rugged rocks
Rude and ragged rascals run

There is the familiar psychological knowingness, the unsupported pretensions to moral profundity, the modulations into Yeats and out again, the pseudo-Metaphysical imagery—'That this round O of faithfulness we swear May never wither to an empty nought Nor petrify into a square'—the irritating technical devices serving no poetic purpose (in the fourth of these poems rhyme is replaced by a jingling of words identical in sound but not in meaning) and the alternation of smartness with simple emotional indulgence. After Auden, Mr W. J. Turner's reflections on *The Theme of Love* seem comparatively simple, but his rhythms are as lifeless here as in *Talking with Soldiers*. The rest of the poetry is of little interest. Of the remaining articles and stories, Seán O'Casey's autobiographical sketch of the time of the Black-and-Tans in

³See the review in *Scrutiny*, Vol. XI, No. 4 (Summer, 1943). A new edition of this admirable little book has now appeared, with 39 more illustrations and 72 more pages of text, including some discussion of Spanish examples.

Dublin has the most vitality, but its prose is over-ripe and melodramatic. Mr Graham Greene's extracts from his diary, *Convoy to West Africa*, are offered as specimens of the novelist's way of collecting raw material, but there seems to be little point in publishing them.

Enough has been said, perhaps, to show that in spite of its good intentions and its attempts to be scholarly *The Mint* is really just another symptom of the prevailing confusion. Its casual variety, its dissipation of energy in matters of secondary interest (such as Mr Rhys Davies's portrait of a Welsh nineteenth-century fantastic), its lack of any clearly grasped policy or standards—these are all caused by the conditions that produce the little reviews in all their pathetic diversity—and similarity. In such an unfavourable environment only unusual energy and consciousness of purpose can hope to bring together the scattered literary public and create the atmosphere in which positive creative achievement might be possible.

R G Cox

DYLAN THOMAS

DEATHS AND ENTRANCES, by Dylan Thomas (Dent, 3/6)

Mr Thomas is rich, and the fact that it is impossible to read more than a couple of pages of his writing without feeling quite certain about his richness indicates that he is prodigal as well. For Mr Thomas is not afraid of adding image to image until the emotional content of his poems spills over and Mr Read gasps 'these poems cannot be reviewed, they can only be acclaimed'. And the attitude of Mr Read is not, on this occasion, unique, for the present volume has drawn an uncritical applause which must almost embarrass the poet, familiar as he must be with the sort of emotional prostration which has welcomed his latest volume. 'Talent' is a counter so frequently handled by his reviewers that it has lost whatever meaning it may have had, and 'genius' is now awarded as if it were a Defence Medal for a particularly short qualifying period of service. Miss Sitwell, that old champion of the new and vigorous, is prepared to write a prose poem to celebrate this latest volume—see her review in the April *Our Time*—but though she awards a bar to Mr Thomas' 'genius', she is not prepared to discuss the matter critically. Clearly it is difficult to think in the presence of the emotions generated by these poems, and perhaps soon the questioning of those emotions will be regarded as a sacrilegious action, for the rich effluence of Dylan Thomas is more than a little touched with religious qualities. Mr Thomas is likely to assume, with the help of the acolyte critics, a priest-like position, the questioning of which will be regarded as heretical. The attaching of the emotions of religion to poetry seems again to have become a familiar procedure, and the 'religious' bias of Mr. Martin Browne's 'Poets' Theatre' not simply an idiosyncrasy of its manager.

Though Mr Thomas' words do not appear to have any clear intention towards the reader, they achieve a unity through atmosphere. They seem to be co-operating to an end, the colour of which has already been noted. Before considering this religiosity more closely, it would perhaps be as well to examine Mr Thomas' claim to consideration as a craftsman, for in his 'craft or sullen art' we shall no doubt discover its force and through the evaluation of that claim gain some sort of indication of his possible worth as a 'religious writer', and not least of course, as a poet.

Mr Thomas has developed several elaborate verse-techniques which have impressed many readers dulled by the fizz of loose current writing. Miss Sitwell, this time as a sort of popular voice, cautioned us—'Here alone among the poets of the younger generation is one who could produce sonnets worthy of our great heritage', and many intelligent writers have expressed their relief at the discipline and formal consideration which Mr Thomas expends. However, whilst one is prepared to concede that the careful internal rhyming, assonance, alliteration, and technical lock, stock and barrel of a poem like 'The Conversation of Prayers' is no doubt conducive to the development of poetry as incantation, one is rather inclined to ask—its religious relevance apart for the moment—what the importance of incantation is construed to be by the poet. For though in the poem named a familiar sense of the general tragedy of things—particularly lovers and little children—is felt, it is difficult to follow the argument of the poem in terms of meaning. It has an emotional logic, which is to say that Mr Thomas knows if this piece is added to that, the reader will feel something, but one cannot be certain that the poet's method was not precisely the same as the reader's response, that in spite of the superficial demonstration of 'craft' the poem is a demonstration of the 'sullen art' of feeling. The lovers and the children are recurrent terms of what is already being called Mr Thomas' 'mythology'. The children sleep, or are 'king(s) of their six years', and are innocent—in fact are, when the garish 'mythological' decoration is stripped off them, exactly what Mabel Lucy Attwell found them to be, and the lovers weep, are mad, frustrated, tender, and so on, and are, in fact, exactly what the films, Shelley, and Lord Tennyson have presented them to be. This is not to say that Mr Thomas does not present situations of complexity. He does, but what is said is never proportional in importance to the terrible difficulty he has found in saying it. Certainly something is happening in the following chaos of erotic imagery.

There where a numberless tongue
Wound their room with a male moan,
His faith around her flew undone
And darkness hung the walls with baskets of snakes,
A furnace-nostrilled column-membered
Super-or-near man
Resembling to her dulled sense

The thief of adolescence,
 Early imaginary half remembered
 Oceanic lover alone
 Jealousy cannot forget for all her sakes,
 Made his bad bed in her good
 Night, and enjoyed as he would
 Crying, white gowned, from the middle moonlit stages
 Out to the tiered and hearing tide,
 Close and far she announced the theft of the heart
 In the taken body at many ages,
 Trespasser and broken bride
 Celebrating at her side
 All blood-signed assailings and vanished marriages in which
 he had no lovely part
 Nor could share, for his pride, to the least
 Mutter and foul wingbeat of the solemnizing nightpriest
 Her holy unholy hours with the always anonymous beast

In this stanza of the poem 'Into her lying down head' the fantasy of either of the lovers seems to have been fair game. It is no use to ask why the 'tongue' is numberless, just as it is no use expecting the focus to be consistent. All elements of the sexual fantasy are given whatever place they are powerful enough to seize, and the writer is handled more than handling. Thus the first four lines appear to be concerned with the man of the poem's situation, whilst the rest is absorbed with the confusion of the woman, although the shift of emphasis appears to be blunt and arbitrary. And the continual use of suggestive hit-or-miss alternatives grouped together—possibly because Mr Thomas wishes to convey his Freudian sense of the ambivalence of situations—is blunt rather than complex in its effect. 'Super or near man', and 'early imaginary half remembered', with 'his bad bed in her good night' seem to occur simply because the one word suggested its antithesis, and loose association out of the emotions of the experience has acquired on its own the importance of a technique. Frequently the mere sound of the words has taken over whatever selective capacity the poet may have, and 'the tiered and hearing tide' is, one supposes, intended to be music as much as anything. The argument of the poem cannot be followed clearly, though the use of 'lovely' in 'in which he had no lovely part' may be an indication of what Mr Thomas is trying to state. One feels that the poem is occasioned by his disgust and resentment at finding no 'lovely part' in the experience, and that he has mistaken that reaction, because of its colour and violence, as poetry in itself. 'The always anonymous beast' is not really anonymous except when expressed as here in the unmanipulated and unaware terms of emotion, and though it is certain that these terms will always have some sort of relevance, one is inclined to say that the relevance is to the analyst's notebook rather than the pre-occupation of the critic.

Although this stanza makes a pretty consistent play at presenting a complex 'form' we seem to be witnessing some sort of game in which the careless reader's feeling is the prize. That Mr Thomas is playing at games does not become certain until we read his 'Vision and Prayer'

This poem is difficult, but mainly for the printer. It is an excellent example of the typographical conceits which seem to have lately come into fashion again, and this, arranged in diamond form or as 'easter wings'—which no doubt makes it metaphysical—is surely a most preposterous case. Though it appears to have a number of key images, and its substance is of birth and blood, and its general implications religious in a rather sensational way—as if Mr Thomas had suddenly discovered the birth and crucifixion all on his own—it presents such a welter of whatever slipped from the poetic tongue that the critical reader comes away with a sense of ripeness to the point of rottenness. An elaborate form again appears to have been imposed in the hope of preventing rotten tissues from falling apart.

I
Am found
O let him
Scald me and drown
Me in his world'd wound
His lightning answers my
Cry My voice burns in his hand
Now I am lost in the blinding
One The sun roars at the prayer's end

It is an attempt which is not likely to succeed and in this case the weltering emotion is finally revealed as a most tedious demonstration of self-pity, and the Christ born, and the Christ crucified are realized to be unhealthy displacements of the writer. Needless to say this sort of indulgence is not Christianity, whatever emotions have been appropriated for private purposes.

The complex verbal structures which Mr Thomas offers have a mixed origin, but apart from the Auden of automatic writing—'Sir, no man's enemy forgiving all but will his negative inversion be prodigal', which is capped in the present volume with 'Friend by enemy I call you out'—Hopkins seems to have been largely drawn upon, though little appears to have been learnt from him. Mr Thomas may write

Never until the mankind making
Bird beast and flower
Fathering and all humbling darkness

but all that his ambiguities effect is confusion. Quite at a tangent to the intention of the poem the reader asks whether mankind does the 'making' in some way or other, when all Mr Thomas is trying to say is that the darkness was responsible. Further, his use of 'striking' images the effect of which—after Mr Spender—

is to inject a little artificial activity into the fabric of the poem, becomes irritating to the reader who wants to know *why* the words are being used. The poet 'must enter again the round/Zion of the water bead/And the synagogue of the ear of corn', and we feel his solidarity with nature, but apart from helping us to know the religious mood of Mr. Thomas, and being 'striking' it is little enough that 'Zion' and 'Synagogue' do for 'bead' and 'corn'—although it might be suggested that the sentimental notion of nature's worship of God is present here. In proportion to the (rather Biblical) 'originality' of the images very little is done, and on analysis one feels that it has all been something of a cucus show. The same characteristics are noticeable in phrases like 'least valley of sack-cloth'—'My holy lucky body'—'your prayed flesh'—'his grey-haired heart'—'spun bud of the world'—and many others. And there are other varieties too of this sort of poetic pseudo-statement. Familiar phrase forms are taken and doctored to this sort of effect: 'happy as the grass was green'—'happy as the heart was long'. And then there are the false analogies—a variety of 'striking' images—such as 'the children innocent as strawberries' which fall down as soon as analysed. Along with all this technical pretension Mr. Thomas can be pompously naive. 'After this death, there is no other' he concludes one poem whilst the advice he gives his son—

Good and bad, two ways
Of moving about your death
By the grinding sea,
King of your heart in the blind days,
Blow away like breath,
Go crying through you and me
And the souls of all men
Into the innocent
Dark, and the guilty dark, and good
Death, and bad death

concludes

Die in unjudging love

Which appears to be a piece of anarchistic confusion which Godwin would have applauded.

I believe that it will probably be argued somewhere among the litter of artistic periodicals that it is unnecessary for Mr. Thomas to yield much to analysis, or even to be particularly coherent. They will say that the emotion generated by his incantation—and anyone who has heard Mr. Thomas reading his own poems over the air will agree that he must regard them as incantatory—is its own and the poem's justification. The argument for sensation by sensationalists is familiar, and one might as well say that a blow on the head is justified by the dizziness it induces. There is, however, at the same time the not unimportant consideration of why the blow was administered at all. It is this area of the experience which Mr. Thomas does not contemplate. As for incan-

tation, it no doubt had a musical relevance for Swinburne and possesses a ritualistic significance for the Australian aborigine. In respect of Mr Thomas however, it merely links up with his religiosity, and if in that it ministers to his emotional needs I am sure no-one will deny him that degree of satisfaction. It should be clear, however, that the processes involved are not of very great importance to poetic expression, the experience of emotional satisfaction or indulgence is not straightaway the experience of poetry.

Mr Thomas does not offer very much to the literary critic for analysis. He is responsible for a great deal which transcends analysis in the work of other young writers. He offers at best an appeal to the sophisticated eye on the look-out for the cheap *frisson* of recognizing a trick which some other competitive poetry-lover missed. Clever-boy pranks in verbal gymnastics are a rather touching tribute to the critics who have over a period of some twenty years attempted to establish the seriousness of poetry, but such exhibitions cannot be mistaken for seriousness themselves. Mr Thomas is a poet who can unselfconsciously—and without any humour apparently—make

O

the first line of a two-stanza poem, and twelve lines afterwards to maintain the stunning effect offer the rhyme

No

to a craft-starved public. I doubt whether this *ersatz* will satisfy the real hunger, or whether Mr Thomas from deep within the tradition of Chattertonian boy wonders and poetic raving will ever be able to offer satisfaction, for it seems certain that he does not wish to be placed anywhere else.

WOLF MANKOWITZ

ELUCIDATING ELIOT

'FOUR QUARTETS' REHEARSED, by Raymond Preston
(Sheed and Ward, 5/-)

The author calls 'this brief record of several readings of *Four Quartets*' 'at best, an experiment in interpretation' and adds 'what is needed to correct the deficiencies of one's personal reading is not an exchange of critical gun-fire, but quiet co-operative discussion of detail'. Unfortunately, I am bound to disagree. Mr Preston's book raises a critical point of the first importance which if settled against him makes most of his interpretation at best unnecessary and at the worst seriously misleading. So that, although the book tempts one to suggest different ways of taking details, I am going to resist the temptation in favour of a fundamental discussion, which I hope can be conducted in a spirit of friendly co-operation rather than spiteful sharp-shooting or the boom of heavy artillery.

I can think of no poem of our time which makes such demands on the reader as *Four Quartets*, and in arguing that Mr Preston's interpretation amounts to a misreading of the poem, I am not in a position to offer a completely satisfactory reading as a model. Nevertheless one can be fairly positive about the general nature of the poem and the kind of distinction the poet has achieved. To take the latter point first, it is a triumph of *intelligence* to have been able to render so much of the poem in terms of 'concrete' images of immediate feeling and sensation which make a direct impact, doing and not merely stating. Secondly, the whole cycle is not something which can be even roughly summed up as a statement or an affirmation. It is rather an examination in which, as it were, negative results are as important as positive results. Thirdly, it is a triumph of *continence*, in refusing to go beyond what was given or found.

Now, if these principles or something like them are accepted, an exacting discipline is imposed on the critic. My general impression of Mr Preston's book is that, perhaps unwittingly, he has relaxed this discipline and in so doing presents an almost perfect example showing that the theological approach is or tends to be a handicap to the critic. It would seem at first sight as if 'those who profess a faith', as Mr Preston puts it, should be admirably equipped for dealing with what is after all religious poetry. Mr Preston is quick to note and detect the faintest allusions to orthodox theology, allusions which those not so well versed in the writings of the Doctors and the Saints might never notice. He quivers in response like a musical instrument when certain sounds are made in the room. His approach to the cycle is respectful, even reverent. He ends his book with the words 'Finally, to understand *Four Quartets* we need to live with them, and even to live by them'. He doesn't gush over his author or use his commentary to display his own erudition. But it is just this willingness to respond which leads him to ignore the characteristic reticence and holding back, the refusal to identify the positions won in the course of exploration with the accepted framework of orthodox belief, features which above all others make this poem great poetry as well as great religious poetry.

Mr Preston must have read of this temptation. Indeed, he seems at times to be saying something very similar. 'It is unnecessary, in reading Section III, to remember that the opening lines contain three phrases adapted from the first speech of *Samson Agonistes*, more relevant is Eliot's debt to St John of the Cross, though a student of that saint will not necessarily be more responsive to Eliot's verse than a sensitive reader who has never heard of him'. 'It is possible to provide notes on the literary associations of sapphires and axle-trees, but I am inclined to think that more important than any meaning we may subsequently find for the images, is the nature of their immediate impact'. These are by no means all the flashes of 'light' to be found in the commentary. Yet Mr Preston does not let this insight direct him to the method

such *aperçus* should impose. He is rather like a blindfolded child, now 'hot' and much more often 'cold', and alternating rapidly from one to the other.

It is because of these passages which are excellent as far as they go, that in justice to Mr. Preston one must speak of a *tendency* to mislead. What is misleading is the total effect. Although I don't suppose Mr. Preston really thinks so, he writes as if he thought that Eliot was in a position similar to that of Dante, that his concern was to embody in poetic form the eternal truths of religion. Mr. Preston quotes Brother George Every as follows:

Religious feeling has to be translated in terms of physical sensation if it is to be made real again to those who are finding their way from a belief that only the physical is real to a renewed belief in the metaphysical. The vision in Section I of *Burnt Norton* is described as an *allegory*. Hence he always tries to say what each image is. For instance, 'The rose-garden is the Garden "where all loves end" of *Ash Wednesday*, and "last of earth left to discover" of *Little Gidding*. It is "our first world", "that which was the beginning", the Earthly Paradise.' Commenting on the passage ending

Then a cloud passed, and the pool was empty

he writes, 'This is the joy of Eden, shattered when the divine light is withdrawn.'

It is but a step from this to treating Eliot as matter for edification. That this step has been taken more than once will be apparent to any reader. Here is the beginning of a summary of *East Coker*:

'Because knowledge derived from experience is so often untrustworthy—such, very briefly, is the argument of the poem—the only possible wisdom is humility. At a certain stage of spiritual progress, the soul must put itself into the hands of God, die in order to be born again.'

And he interprets the theme of the opening lines of Section III as being 'not merely physical death, but the darkness and destruction of the Last Judgment'. He ends his commentary on *The Dry Salvages* with the sentence, '*The Dry Salvages* begins with what looks like the pagan vision, and ends with the Christian.'

Unless it is because he regards the poems as meditations on well-known religious themes, I cannot understand why Mr. Preston spends so much time quoting from St. John of the Cross. As will be seen from my quotations, Mr. Preston does not regard the hunting up of allusions and parallels as in itself a worthy pastime. And we may well wonder what conception of the poems (and what readers!) was in his mind when he wrote (p. 33) 'A study of St. John of the Cross is outside the scope of this essay, but readers who cannot follow the sense of the remainder of this strophe will, I think, find their immediate difficulties removed by the second paragraph of the passage from Aquinas which I quoted earlier.' Mr.

Preston is speaking about the end of Section III of *East Coker*, where his zeal has, I think, led to an unconvincing interpretation

‘In order to arrive there,
To arrive *where you are*

is Eliot's adaptation of St John's phrase, "In order to arrive at being everything"—in other words, at complete realization of one's potentialities, which *in time* are always in process of being realized'

But this is not the gravamen of the charge. The danger of this book is that it will lead an innocent reader to substitute a body of conventional thought for the fresh original thought of the poet. Mr Preston does *not* want to save the reader the trouble of reading Eliot, but his book *does* save the reader the trouble of understanding the poem. The temptation is offered, I am convinced, in all innocence. There is no *calculated* irrelevance. It is merely the result of relaxing critical discipline. 'In spite of its virtue, the wisdom of the countryman rooted in village tradition and the life of the countryside and the procession of the seasons is in the end joyless'. When we ask in what phrases of the poem (Section I of *East Coker*) this joylessness is manifested, we are referred in a foot-note to 'This is substantially a statement made by Mr Eliot during the Malvern Conference, 1941'.

An allied misconception, which I feel sure that Mr Preston would repudiate if it were put to him in this form, runs through the commentary. It is that Eliot was substantially in the position of Donne, struggling towards faith. Commenting on the opening of *Burnt Norton* he writes, 'The poet is expressing a state which is neither faith nor doubt: he is *on the edge of faith*'. Elsewhere he is anxious to show that faith triumphs over despair. For instance, of Section II of *The Dry Salvages* he writes, 'The passage *appears* to be an expression of profound despair and fatalism, as if continued existence in this "time" were felt as an intolerable stagnation ('Ridiculous the waste sad time')—a movement which as the verse form suggests is not movement, because moving to no goal. But even while the poet builds this castle of despair, he shows us that there is only sand to build it on: for the theme of the Annunciation, hinted in the first stanza, is echoed antiphonally in the stanzas which follow and directly stated—*breathed*—in the last

Only the hardly, barely prayable

Prayer of the one Annunciation'. 'Eliot spoke in *East Coker* of the fear of "belonging to God"'. He has, in these two or three pages, directed an immense imaginative power and subtlety of poetic resource towards undermining this fear by means of fundamental human terrors, the reality of which we cannot gainsay. And after this, there is the calm voice summing up—and what concentrated attention it commands!'' The effect of passages such

as these is to suggest that Eliot is a comfortable author. Which is not what Mr Preston intended. His view is expressed in his final remarks on *Little Gidding*: 'The joy felt in these lines has been won, the faith has come of facing despair and conquering it'. For Mr Preston *Four Quartets* might have been entitled *Look, we have come through!*

Readers of this journal are familiar with the point I have been trying to establish. That it should have been missed or so very imperfectly grasped by such a decent, modest and conscientious writer as Mr Preston shows himself to be on every page, must be the excuse for noticing this book at such length. Good criticism of Eliot's poetry is hard to come by, but I would suggest that 'those who profess a faith' might re-read with profit the articles which have appeared in *Scrutiny* and in particular the following passage:

these are, no doubt, statements, to be taken as such, but though they imply a theological context, their actual context is the poem. It would be absurd to contend that the passage is not an invitation to a relating of the two contexts, but nothing is gained from the point of view of either poetry or religion by an abandonment of one context for the other, or by an approach that refuses or ignores or relaxes the peculiar discipline that the poetry is. And the critic can hardly insist too much that this affirmation which seems to strain forward out of the poem must, by the reader of the poem, be referred back to what has gone before. And he who doesn't read the poem ignores the poet's genius even while applauding.

H. A. MASON

MALINOWSKI

THE DYNAMICS OF CULTURE CHANGE, by Bronislaw Malinowski. Ed. by Phyllis M. Kaberry (Yale University Press, \$2.50, Oxford University Press, 16/6)

Malinowski died in 1943, leaving behind him a number of notes on culture contact and change. He had intended eventually to produce a book on this subject, in collaboration with Dr Kaberry, who has now edited his notes and added to them sections of Malinowski's published articles to form the present work. It was never planned in book form by Malinowski, and by linking together the notes in the form of a book, Dr Kaberry has been able to do little more than produce a number of reflections around one or two common themes, with a mere illusion of sustained argument. Her respectful anxiety to preserve intact as many sentences written by her teacher as possible has resulted in numerous repetitions of ideas. These are natural enough in a mass of scattered notes, but should not have been allowed to persist in the finished book. Less

disciplinai enthusiasm, and more regard for a concise exposition of the subject would have resulted in a shorter book, and most of the essential material here could have been incorporated in one or two lengthy essays. The pretentious title, too, might well have been replaced by the more accurate sub-title, *An Inquiry Into Race Relations in Africa*, since the book makes no contribution to anthropological theory beyond that already made and published elsewhere by Malinowski. In fact, this is a 'popular' book, written primarily to win sympathy, particularly official sympathy, for approaches to colonial administrative problems based upon knowledge gained in anthropological research. It is well documented propaganda, and written in a good cause, but one could wish that the book as a whole were consistently directed at a particular public, instead of assuming different publics on different pages. Alternatively, it might have justified its title by concentrating a little more on making some theoretical contribution.

The book is divided into two parts. The first consists of a number of essays on the scope and nature of anthropological investigation, and to readers of Malinowski's earlier works will be familiar ground. The second part analyses in some detail several of the more important types of conflict and misunderstanding which arise between Africans and Europeans living in contact with each other. Here Malinowski's journalistic facility for easy generalisation is confined to specific questions of maladjustment, and the second part, though no newer than the first from an anthropological point of view, is considerably more satisfactory. The potential field of anthropological study is wide, and the study itself comparatively undeveloped, and it is only by adhering to the study of social phenomena which are easily specified that the anthropologist can avoid deceiving himself with purely verbal definitions and conclusions. Such is that with which the first essay begins.

'Culture change is the process by which the existing order of a society, that is, its social, spiritual and material civilization, is transformed from one type into another'

General definitions of this sort mean very little from the scientific point of view which Malinowski attempts to adopt. No 'types' of civilization have as yet been defined, and a generalization like the one quoted is useless as an instrument for investigating the results of, for example, the replacement of a tribal chief by a paid European official.

Malinowski does demonstrate, ably and convincingly, the practical value of anthropological findings to colonial government, he points out also that the only approach in field-work which can be of such value is that based upon what he calls 'the functional theory of culture'. 'Functional' is by now a much misused and ambiguous word in anthropology. Originally, asserting that a society was not merely a haphazard assortment of culture traits, but was an organic whole in which inter-related institutions

organized human activities around a consistent system of values, the functionalist school made possible a necessary reorientation of interest in the study of primitive society. Malinowski did a great deal towards leading the reaction against the influence of the historical schools, with their constant preoccupation with purely conjectural 'origins' and 'developments'. He soundly concentrated rather on the essential similarities of primitive and civilized life than on the superficially more startling contrasts between them, and examined primitive communities as living organisms while others were studying them as museum specimens, illustrating posited stages in the development of Western European civilization. Since then, the revolution in anthropological study has been more or less completed, and it seems undesirable to continue the use of the word 'function' in speaking of social institutions, as it tends to be used in a quite illegitimate teleological sense.

Malinowski's opinion of the exclusive value of his method of investigation leads him naturally into opposition, not only to the antiquarian or merely curious interests of some anthropologists, but also to those who attempt, by historical reconstruction of the conjectured state of African society before European conquest, to provide themselves with a norm of social integration against which the degree of disintegration brought about by European contact can be assessed. Some of the features of earlier types of social organization can, he agrees, be fairly certainly reconstructed, but since they are no longer empirically verifiable, and, except in special instances, persist little as influences on the present situation, they cannot figure very importantly in a study of what is happening now. 'It is essential', he says, 'not to confuse the reconstructed past with the reality of what still survives as a vital residue of past history'. Here one is in total agreement. Monographs too often make it impossible to decide what the effective influence of belief and custom at the time of the investigation actually is, and whether the writer is describing the life of to-day or reconstructing that of twenty or thirty years ago. While, however, this distinction must be made, there is always a danger amongst those followers of Malinowski who tend to exaggerate his views that one value of historical reconstruction may be forgotten. The change taking place in African society to-day is in many ways no more than an extreme example of the changes undergone by all small scale communities affected by the Industrial Revolution. It is taking place with greater speed, and consequently with greater intensity and more obvious conflicts and disturbances, and it is complicated by colour discrimination and other factors. In the material sense, some things are being gained, but in other ways much of importance has been lost. It is of considerable interest for us to know as much as possible about the nature of those elements in stable, small-scale communities which are rapidly disappearing, and of those values which are disappearing along with conditions permitting of their constant expression and reassertion. To be 'practical' and 'scientific' in Malinowski's sense,

is no *substitute* for this qualitative interest in social organization. In fact, of course, Malinowski is bound to conjecture, though with very good evidence, a type of social stability which has largely disappeared in Africa, since without such reconstruction institutions which persist from the older social organization would be isolated and meaningless.

Although, in writing of the value and limitations of history, he adopts a quite acceptable attitude towards historical reconstruction as it affects the study of African society to-day, he goes too far when he speaks of changes in Africa as possessing 'a cultural determinism which is neither African nor European' and 'a process and reality *sui generis*'. While rightly dismissing the idea that it is possible to study the changed situation by assuming that mixed African and European institutions can be considered as integrated parts of a mixed community—the District Officer functioning as the chief, the missionary as a tribal priest and so on, he goes on to say that

'a native congregation under the supervision and guidance of white clergy, a mine or factory where African labour works under the direction of white staff, a bush school where African children are taught by European teachers

are 'new forms of social organization'. Except in a very elementary and unimportant way, this is not true. A bush school, or a factory, are essentially European in principle. It is because there is no such 'new form of social organization' as Malinowski suggests that contradictions arise in Africa, and it is the extent and nature of these contradictions that the anthropologist can point out. European education inculcates eventually European attitudes and creates European appetites, and no middle way between ultimate admission, for better or worse, into the large scale European society, and exclusion and segregation, exists. The factory in which African labour is working is consistent with other forms of European social organization, and inconsistent with the tribal way of life. Anthropologists can point out where this inconsistency causes most suffering and conflict, but scientific investigation cannot solve problems of administrative policy. Malinowski sometimes appears to suggest that scientific evidence shows the necessity for certain moral attitudes. For example

'The anthropologist must insist that a substantially increased measure of real and tangible benefits is necessary, in the interests not only of the African, but of the white community. In the long run, African and European interests converge because stable and effective rule by a minority can only be founded on the real satisfaction, prosperity and welfare of the natives'

Unless he is admitted into administrative councils and is able to accept full responsibility, as an informed government officer, for

policies initiated by him, the anthropologist is not in a position to insist upon any policy at all. He can reveal contradictions in policy, and suggest what its effects will probably be. His work may also show the government what the most expedient course of action would be likely to be, but the solution of anthropological problems is not, as Malinowski seems to suggest, the solution also of moral problems. And throughout this book one is never sure for very long with which type of problem he is dealing. One reads, for example

'It will be easily seen that the real problem in culture change does not lie in the mechanism and technicalities of law, but in the consideration of how a minimum of natural wealth must be left to the native, and how he must be assisted in his natural development by modern methods with due regard given to European interests'

The real problem, then, is largely a moral problem. Elsewhere we find that the anthropologist investigating culture change

'need not either resort to the historical comparison of pre-European conditions, nor yet introduce any moral or specifically normative values'

So after all, the problems are scientific. It is inevitable that there should be inconsistency of this sort in a book put together as this is. The fault, however, is partly Malinowski's, in that he tries to appeal to too many types of reader at once, and varies his manner accordingly. Here he writes as an anthropologist, interested in the advancement of scientific method and hypothesis, then he becomes a government adviser, next he is a sympathetic and informed member of the general public, with his heart in the right place, then again, a diplomatist and tactician. No one can adopt so many positions satisfactorily in 162 pages.

Since a great deal is made in this book of what is termed 'the three column approach' to the problems of culture change, some passing reference must be made to it. Briefly, he suggests that data available are to be systematized in three main, and one or two subsidiary columns, the contents of which are to be kept distinct from each other. The main column headings are to be

- (a) White influences, interests and intentions
- (b) Processes of culture contact and change
- (c) Surviving forms of tradition

and the rest, a column for features of the reconstructed African past, and one for 'new forces of spontaneous African re-integration or reaction'. This 'system' was perhaps useful for instruction in Malinowski's seminars, as any hints on organizing a complex and confusing mass of facts might be useful. But no theoretical contribution is made in reproducing it and referring to it at con-

siderable length in this book, and the disproportion between its intrinsic value and that ascribed to it throughout the book eventually makes the 'three column approach' appear rather absurd

Apart from these faults, the general reader will find the examples quoted in detail of some interest, even if he is unable to accept anthropological investigation as such a general remedy for African complaints as Malinowski suggests. There are many over-simplifications which give themselves away in the course of the work, as when at one point he says that 'the pre-European situation (of the tribal chief) implied absolute sovereignty,—complete and undivided power, the right to carry on war and slave raids and to control the wealth of the tribe', while admitting elsewhere that, in recognizing the chief without recognizing other sources of authority within the tribe, early European administration helped to destroy some of the important checks which the old system imposed on his power. As propaganda the book may be of some value, and one may suppose that, had Malinowski had the opportunity of writing the whole himself in the form of a book, some more considerable anthropological interest would have attached to it. As it stands, it attempts to cover the same theoretical ground as a recent book by Godfrey and Monica Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change*, but does so in a more superficial way. This is to be expected, perhaps, where an attempt to persuade a general audience conflicts with a feeling of obligation to contribute towards the development of sociological theory.

R G LIENHARDT

BRITISH COUNCIL RECORDINGS

PURCELL *Dido and Aeneas* (Philharmonia String Orchestra conducted by Constant Lambert, with Joan Hammond, Isobel Baillie, Edith Coates, Dennis Noble, Gladys Ripley, Sylvia Patriss) H M V under auspices of British Council

An adequate modern recording of this central English classic was overdue, and this one should meet with an enthusiastic reception. It is not perfect by a long way, my set at least suffers from a mechanical defect which blurs the high notes (on several gramophones electrical and acoustic, all normally excellent), and the spirit of the performance perhaps lacks the intimacy appropriate to baroque chamber opera, despite a superbly witch-like performance by Edith Coates and the convincingly authentic sound of Boris Ord's continuo playing. Nonetheless to listen to these records is a most moving and satisfying experience, when we have absorbed them we shall understand much more about not only Purcell, but

about contemporary English music too, and about the problems with which English composers were faced after the breakdown of our musical continuity

To my mind the most interesting aspect of these records is the modification which they suggest in the British Council's attitude to recorded music. Previously they have recorded only contemporary works, which is understandable since their aim was primarily to publicize British music of our own time, to show how alive our musical culture now is. But it seems to me equally important to stress the fact that we have a musical past as good as anyone else's and, at one of the greatest periods in musical history, perhaps better than most. The notion that the English aren't (or weren't until recently) particularly musical is the result of the barbarous popular conception of musical culture as something which appertains exclusively to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries during which period it is certainly true that we had, mainly for social and economic reasons, virtually no significant music. But as a more civilized notion of the evolution of musical culture slowly develops (there are plenty of signs of it), and as the sixteenth century in particular becomes reinstated, it is surely not too much to hope that the relatively vast public which at least pays lip-service to Shakespeare might (*given the opportunity*) come to see that we have in Byrd, Gibbons, Bull, Dowland and Tallis—to mention only the supreme names—composers who are a complementary phenomenon to Shakespeare and, in the case of Byrd at least, a composer of Shakespearean (or Bachian or Beethovenian) stature.

Here surely is an opportunity for the British Council. Our great music of the Shakespearean period is still known only to specialists or anyway to people of specialized interests because the average 'concert-goer' never gets an opportunity to hear it. Of course I know the orchestral-music fan has an initial prejudice against sixteenth century polyphony and all it entails, but how can you expect to change this except by giving him opportunities to hear the music? I can testify from personal experience in adult education work that a class of very 'average' orchestral-concert-goers can find, say, the Byrd Five Part Mass and the big pavaues and galliards of Bull and Gibbons intensely moving and a revolutionary experience in the hint which they offer of different musical horizons. I've had to repeat the Byrd Mass several times, and have been unable to fulfil the demand for more simply owing to the lack of adequate recordings. It is indeed scandalous that the Decca recording of the Byrd Mass is the only good modern recording of the *great* works of the period in the catalogues. Cannot the British Council give us a substantial album of Byrd (say the Great Service, some Latin motets, the Four Part Mass, and the magnificent Six Part String Fantasia which is so beautifully played by the Jacques String Orchestra), an album of Gibbons (the Big Service, an anthem or two, the pavaues and galliards for virginals and, if a suitable instrument could be found, the Four Part Fantasia and the Fancy in Gamutt Flat for organ), a volume

of instrumental music by Bull (again the big works for virginals and organ—the Walsingham variations, Queen Elizabeth's Pavane, the 'sinfoniae' pavaues, and the profound A minor *In nomine*), a selection from Dowland's *Pilgrime's Solace* (if an adequate lutenist can be found), Tallis's *Lamentations*, Taverner's *Western Wynde* Mass, and a selection of the most serious and important string music of Feriabosco, William Lawes and Jenkins?

The remarkable success of Decca's records of the Byrd Five Part Mass seems to suggest that a series of records such as those suggested above (and they're no more than a start) needn't be commercially a failure. But even if a little money were lost on them it would be worth it, considering that they would offer to thousands of people their first opportunity to hear some of the greatest music that any country has produced, and to gain some idea of what the English musical tradition really stands for. Even if they weren't a popular success (though I believe they, relatively, would be) and were regarded more as an educational venture, they could, if used in adult education work and in schools over the whole country, in a few years make a difference to the general level of musical literacy and cultivation which would be of the utmost benefit not only to the 'public' but to all composers working in England to-day. There are only two provisos: the music selected *must* be the big works, the representative (but tragically unknown) ones, for the idea one gets of our great music from the few tiny 'charming' snippets that are normally played is about comparable with the notion one would have of Mozart if one knew him only by the divertimenti he wrote when he was eighteen, rather than by the G Minor Quintet or Symphony, and the performances *must* be both authentic (scholarly) *and of competent virtuosity*.

BERLIOZ *Harold in Italy* (played by Boston Symphony Orchestra with William Primrose, viola, conducted by Koussevitzky)
H M V

These records are (the cliché is for once justifiable) terrific, the most exciting recording that has come my way since Decca's version of the Byrd Five Part Mass. Put on the fugato opening of *Harold* and listen. It isn't only that the music is so electrically original: what is remarkable is the extraordinary tautness of the draughtsmanship, the linear conception, the lyrical vitality which is at once copious and astringent. It is utterly unlike any representative nineteenth century music, melodic in impetus, pure in texture and harmony and without, anywhere, a vestige of padding, and nothing could be more essentially musical in structure and evolution (however literary the programme). Or listen to the Pilgrims' March, so apparently simple, yet always doing the unexpected thing at the ends of the phrases, always demanding the alertest response, or to the brigands whose 'frenzy' is

disciplined by such classical lucidity of texture and such subtlety of formalization. Put this movement beside even such a fine work as Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* and it is the Stravinsky that sounds old-fashioned, the whole of the bridge passage at the beginning of the movement and the miraculous reminiscence of the Pilgrims' song towards the end are imaginative conceptions which could occur only to the very highest type of genius. And my conviction is strengthened that Berlioz is immeasurably the greatest composer since Beethoven—that he belongs indeed alongside Beethoven, the mature Mozart, Bach, Monteverdi, Lasso, Josquin and Byrd. We need more recordings of Berlioz's big, later works (the only Berlioz work widely known, the *Symphonie Fantastique*, is after all his first representative work, written at the age of twenty-six), notably the *Te Deum*, more of *L'Enfance du Christ*, and above all the *Grande Messe des Morts*, to my mind his greatest work (though I've never heard *Les Troyens*), and one of the supreme things in European music. An admirable French recording of the Mass already exists (the B B C broadcast some of it a few months back), cannot we have an English pressing?

W H M

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS *Job*, a Masque for Dancing (B B C Symphony Orchestra conducted by Adrian Boult H M V)

BLISS Ballet Suite, *Miracle in the Gorbals* (Royal Opera House Orchestra conducted by Constant Lambert Columbia)

RAWSTHORNE Overture, *Street Scene* (Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Constant Lambert H M V)

POULENC *Le Bestiaire* and *Montparnasse* (Bernac and Poulenc H M V)

The recording of Vaughan Williams's *Job* which I've so often pleaded for in these pages has come at last, and it's worth waiting for. Perhaps, now we've had a chance to get to know the records of the D Major Symphony, *Job* seems, by comparison with that more recent and 'classically' great work, not quite as independent of the stage business as one had remembered it as being. But it contains superb things (particularly the Sons of the Morning) and the music as a whole is built on a Blakean scale, one doesn't need to say more to indicate that, as well as a key work in the English tradition, it is one of the great achievements of contemporary music. Performance and recording are excellent.

Miracle in the Gorbals, like much of Bliss's most successful music, is sheer melodrama, but as such highly effective. The general impression is more relaxed than *Checkmate*, it hasn't the earlier ballet's acidulated venom and economy, and has (for the young lovers) passages of an amiably Tchaikovian *allure* and even

one hunk of pure Gerishwin, the scene of the killing is itself much less blood-curdling than the comparable one in *Checkmate*. Taking it all round it is music of charm and devilish competence, and it has Bliss's habitual instinct for physical movement. In his own genre, none of our composers can rival him.

Alan Rawsthorne has the admirable ability to compose 'light' and film music which fulfils its required function without calling for any sacrifice of the idiom's integrity, no-one would think of calling *Street Scene* (which was intended as a 'popular' piece) highbrow, while at the same time one can never have any doubt about it being Rawsthorne. It's a brilliantly written, emotionally fresh piece, though I hope the British Council's choice of it does not mean that they have passed by Rawsthorne's most representative and important works, the *Piano Concerto* and the *Symphonic Studies*. They both ought to be recorded.

Of the two Poulenc songs *Le Bestiaire* group was written when the composer was nineteen or twenty, the other one quite recently, and one can't say that he's got much wiser in the last twenty-five years. Indeed there's nothing in the relatively lush juicy drawing-room music of his later years to come up to the tender Satiean purity of his very first work (one many mention in particular 'La Carpe' from the *Bestiaire* songs). Nonetheless the drawing-room music is excellent of its kind (it's directly in the tradition of Renaldo Hahn), and the songs are remarkable for their sensitiveness to the French language. Perhaps this is why the late songs are always melodically so much more interesting than the piano pieces.

But this record—and the others these artists have recently made in England—is chiefly notable for the performance. Although one wouldn't think of Poulenc as anything but a very little composer, and although Bernac's magnificent voice perhaps isn't *quite* what it used to be, yet the performances of these two seem to have generations of tradition and artistry behind them. Because the traditions of French culture have been relatively so continuous, they have a 'flair', a quality of civilization, which artists in this country find it difficult or impossible to attain to. To listen to them is an education of the spirit. The recording is both resonant and delicate.

W H M

SCRUTINY

A Quarterly Review

Edited by

D W HARDING

F R LEAVIS

L C KNIGHTS

W H MELLERS

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M. CAMUS AND THE TRAGIC HERO¹

IT is a curiosity of contemporary French literature that there are at least three prose writers who have each published a philosophical essay, a play and a novel. M. Albert Camus has written, besides the works under review, two plays, *Le Malentendu*, *Caligula* and an 'Essai sur l'absurde' entitled *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*. Some comparatively immature essays have been collected and published under the title *Les Noces*. Although M. Camus is often bracketed for publicity purposes with Simone de Beauvoir and Jean-Paul Sartre as an 'Existentialist', the grouping has about as much significance as that which used to link Messrs Auden, Day Lewis and Spender. The three French writers all have a 'philosophy' which they illustrate in plays and novels. M. Camus (who once 'taught' philosophy) holds very interesting views about 'l'absurde', which, though not apparently² cogent as 'pure philosophy', represent an attitude towards life and death shared by many people in our times. 'Les pages qui suivent traitent d'une sensibilité absurde qu'on peut trouver éparse dans le siècle—et non d'une philosophie absurde que notre temps, à proprement parler, n'a pas connue. Il est donc d'une honnêteté élémentaire de marquer, pour commencer, ce qu'elles doivent à certains esprits contemporains'.³ In spite of this M. Camus deserves consideration on his own merits.

In dealing with a writer who has a professed 'philosophy' which he can formulate in essays and articles, it is natural to look first at the quality of the 'thought' in the novel, taking thought in its widest sense of a total attitude. M. Camus, I think, intended *The Outsider* to be a vehicle for his philosophy in this non-technical, human sense. Besides this, another kind of thought went to the making of this novel. It has the rare virtue of being thought out from the first page to the last, indeed, the last page is involved in the first. The novel has the further rhetorical grace of yielding its full meaning only at the end, so that it must be read through again to grasp its total significance. The author is firmly in command and keeps his material at a proper distance by a controlled, lucid style with only occasional 'literary' passages.

The story of *The Outsider* is told in the first person by a young clerk, Meursault, living in Algiers. Three years ago he had put

¹*L'Etranger*, by Albert Camus (Gallimard)

The Outsider, by Albert Camus (Hamish Hamilton, 6/-)

Lettres à un Ami Allemand, by Albert Camus (Gallimard)

²According to Mr A. J. Ayer in *Horizon*, March, 1946

³From the preface to *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*

his mother into a home for the aged at Maiengo. When the novel begins his mother has just died and he attends her funeral. On his return to Algiers he goes to a swimming pool and there he meets Marie, a former typist in his office. They go to a comic film in the evening and later to bed. The girl would like to get married and the hero, though not enthusiastic, is willing. Before this, however, Meursault consents to assist a pimp, Raymond, in a squabble with one of his female victims. They strike up a friendship and with Marie go to the seaside on the following Saturday. They are followed there by a group of Arabs, friends of the injured woman's brother. There is a fight, the Arab slashes Raymond, but they separate and Meursault takes away Raymond's revolver. Later he goes for a stroll and without thinking returns to the spot where they had met the Arabs. The sun is now at its height. The hero is blinded by perspiration and when the Arab flashes a knife, Meursault shoots him and empties the revolver into his dead body.

The 'case' might possibly have ended there with a verdict of homicide in extenuating circumstances. But the hero's answers to the examining magistrate shock his Christian feelings. The magistrate extends his enquiries to the events preceding the murder and thus all the apparently trivial happenings of the time since the death of Madame Meursault take on a new meaning. This is fully brought out at the trial where the hero secures his own condemnation by sticking to what he believes to be the truth. He refuses to receive the consolations of religion and assaults the chaplain who comes to visit him in his cell. His last wish is for a reviling crowd to witness his execution.

This story might have been taken from the newspapers, just as Stendhal is reported to have discovered in a newspaper the crime story he worked up in *Le Rouge et le Noir*. The most salient difference is that in *The Outsider* the point of the story does not lie in the conflict between the hero and conventional society. As Meursault's outburst at the end of the novel clearly shows, he is a metaphysical and not a social martyr. His tragedy is that of all men, or rather of all men who share M. Camus's beliefs. The critical passage is spoken to the prison chaplain:

'Rien, rien n'avait d'importance et je savais bien pourquoi. Lui aussi savait pourquoi. Du fond de mon avenir, pendant toute cette vie absurde que j'avais menée, un souffle obscur remontait vers moi à travers des années qui n'étaient pas encore venues et ce souffle égalisait sur son passage tout ce qu'on me proposait alors dans les années pas plus réelles que je vivais. Que m'importaient la mort des autres, l'amour d'une mère, que m'importaient son dieu, les vies qu'on choisit, les destins qu'on élit, puisqu'un seul destin devait m'élire, moi-même et avec moi des milliards de privilégiés qui, comme lui, se disaient mes frères. Comprendait-il, comprenait-il donc? Tout le monde était privilégié. Il n'y avait que des privilégiés. Les autres aussi on les condamnerait un jour. Lui aussi on le condamnerait.

Qu'importait si accusé de meurtre il était exécuté pour n'avoir pas pleuré à l'enterrement de sa mère Qu'importait que Raymond fût mon copain autant que Céleste qui valait mieux que lui? Qu'importait que Marie donnât aujourd'hui sa bouche à un nouveau Meursault?

The substance of this argument is a commonplace of Christian moralists, only they use it to condemn the unbeliever's way of life. The 'Outsider', however, regards it as a justification and cries out in triumph, 'j'étais sûr de moi, sûr de tout, plus sûr que lui, sûr de ma vie et de cette mort qui allait venir. Oui, je n'avais que cela. Mais du moins, je tenais cette vérité autant qu'elle me tenait. J'avais eu raison, j'avais encore raison, j'avais toujours raison'.

There are three main arguments to be considered. The first is, that certain things usually considered important are really unimportant. Secondly, there are certain values, but it is a matter of indifference whether we pursue or neglect them. And behind the confident affirmation there is a belief in certain positive values which remain unaffected by the inevitability of death.

Before going into these points it will be as well to dismiss a misapprehension about the way we are to take the hero. The public prosecutor describes him as a monster. 'Il disait qu'à la vérité, je n'en avais point d'âme, et que rien d'humain, et pas un des principes moraux qui gardent le cœur des hommes ne m'était accessible'. Mr Connolly in his introduction says, 'According to one critic, the Outsider himself represents the drying up of all bourgeois sources of sensation, and the complete decadence of renaissance man, he is a "poor white"'. Meursault says of himself, 'j'étais comme tout le monde, absolument comme tout le monde' (Only, of course, he intuitively understood that life was 'absurd'). He was perhaps a little different in that, as he says, 'j'avais un peu perdu l'habitude de m'interroger' and that he never spoke unless he had something worth saying, which was not often.

Other critics have made a fuss over the lack of 'inner life' displayed by the hero. It seems to me that we should regard the lack of self-conscious reflection as a device of concentration. It also allows M. Camus to evade some awkward questions, for his hero is not the Dumb Ox some critics have made him out to be. 'Je n'ai jamais eu de véritable imagination', he says, but the point of the remark is Wordsworthian.

He had as much imagination
As a pint-pot,—he never could
Fancy another situation,
From which to dart his contemplation
Than that wherein he stood

As we shall see, the hero glories in his attachment to the here and now.

So I think we should take Meursault to be the hero, the worthy representative of a serious attitude to life. M. Camus has chosen

to make him less articulate about what he stands for than about what he regards as unimportant 'je n'étais peut-être pas sûr de ce qui m'intéressait réellement, mais j'étais tout à fait sûr de ce qui ne m'intéressait pas'. He has, for example, no illusions about romantic love 'elle m'a demandé si je l'aimais. Je lui ai répondu que cela ne voulait rien dire'—or about marriage 'Elle a observé alors que le mariage était une chose grave. J'ai répondu "Non"'. He is indifferent about travelling and living in Paris. Even killing 'J'ai pensé à ce moment qu'on pouvait tirer ou ne pas tirer et que tout cela se valait'. Consequently the extra bullets he had fired into the corpse do not in his eyes require explanation 'ce dernier point n'avait pas tellement d'importance'. The murder inspires 'un certain ennui' rather than regret. Je n'avais jamais pu regretter vraiment quelque chose. J'étais toujours pris par ce qui allait arriver, par aujourd'hui ou par demain'. Unlike one of James's heroes, he regarded it as quite normal to forget people once they were dead 'Morte, elle (Marie) ne m'intéressait plus. Je trouvais cela normal comme je comprenais très bien que les gens m'oublieraient après ma mort'. Another 'question sans importance' is religious belief. He does not know what sin is. The desire for an after life 'n'avait pas plus d'importance que de souhaiter d'être riche, de nager très vite ou d'avoir une bouche mieux faite. C'était du même ordre'.

From these few examples it will be seen that the writing off of dead values is extensive. The author tries to make us feel that it was dictated by a passionate concern for what the hero at least regards as living values. Chief among these is the ideal of manliness. We have seen what the prosecution made of the hero but among the witnesses for the defence is a friend of Meursault's, Céleste, a restaurant keeper, who provides a note of choric commentary. When he was asked what he thought of the hero he told the court, as the hero says, 'que j'étais un homme', and when asked to state what he meant by that, 'il a déclaré que tout le monde savait ce que cela voulait dire'. Friendship between men is also precious. A strong passion fills him for the town he lives in, the cool of the summer evenings, etc.

'En sortant du palais de justice pour monter dans la voiture, j'ai reconnu un court instant l'odeur et la couleur du soir d'été. Dans l'obscurité de ma prison roulante, j'ai retrouvé un à un, comme du fond de ma fatigue, tous les bruits familiers d'une ville que j'aimais et d'une certaine heure où il m'arrivait de me sentir content. Le cri des vendeurs de journaux dans l'air déjà détendu, les derniers oiseaux dans le square, l'appel des marchands de sandwiches, la plainte des tramways dans les hauts tournants de la ville et cette rumeur du ciel avant que la nuit bascule sur le port, tout cela recomposait pour moi un itinéraire d'aveugle, que je connaissais bien avant d'entrer en prison. Oui, c'était l'heure où, il y avait bien longtemps, je me sentais content'.

This lyric style appears reserved for such feelings. Summing up the hero's attitude, 'Aimez-vous donc cette terre à ce point?', the priest murmurs and asks the hero what kind of life after death he would like. 'Une vie où je pourrais me souvenir de celle-ci', he replies and after his final outburst he lies down in his cell.

'Des bruits de campagne montaient jusqu'à moi. Des odeurs de nuit, de terre et de sel rafraichissaient mes tempes. La merveilleuse paix de cet été endormi entraînait en moi comme une marée. Comme si cette grande colère m'avait purgé du mal, vide d'espoir, devant cette nuit chargée de signes et d'étoiles, je m'ouvrais pour la première fois à la tendre indifférence du monde. De l'éprouver si pareil à moi, si fraternel enfin, j'ai senti que j'avais été heureux, et que je l'étais encore.'

This kind of happiness is perhaps the supreme value for the hero (M. Camus ended his essay with the phrase, 'Il faut imaginer Sisyphe heureux').

With everything so satisfactory one may wonder whether M. Camus's vision of things can properly be called tragic at all. To lose twenty years of life is a serious matter for one who measures life in quantity. The question is whether behind the series of coincidences which bring about the hero's early death there lurks the notion of inevitable doom. The inevitable seems in this novel to be the ever-present possibility of *un malheur*, so that life is really a rat trap. 'Comme si les chemins familiers tracés dans les ciels d'été pouvaient mener aussi bien aux prisons qu'aux sommeils innocents'. The choric Celeste gave as his verdict, 'Pour moi, c'est un malheur. Un malheur, tout le monde sait ce que c'est. Ça vous laisse sans défense'. I am not sure, however, whether M. Camus wished to introduce any other conception of destiny than the mere fact of inevitable death which makes everything equally important and unimportant.

There remains the question: what is the heroic attitude in a world where *tout se vaut*? For the hero it is passive acceptance. He sums this attitude up in prison:

'J'ai souvent pensé alors que si l'on m'avait fait vivre dans un tronc d'arbre sec, sans autre occupation que de regarder la fleur de ciel au-dessus de ma tête, je m'y serais peu à peu habitué. J'aurais attendu des passages d'oiseaux ou des rencontres de nuages comme j'attendais ici les curieuses cravates de mon avocat et comme, dans un autre monde, je patientais jusqu'au samedi pour étreindre le corps de Marie. Or, à bien réfléchir, je n'étais pas dans un arbre sec. Il y avait plus malheureux que moi. C'était d'ailleurs une idée de maman, et elle le répétait souvent, qu'on finissait par s'habituer à tout.'

The blurb says, 'The tragedy which befalls him has all the excitement and drama of the best American novels, but the deep ironical philosophy of this new and most original French writer

is all his own, and does for the sultry atmosphere of Algiers what Hemingway has done for Spain' The surface similarity to the work of Hemingway and Faulkner is not, I think, very significant Camus presents the collapse of European civilization For it will not do here to describe the values Meursault rejects as merely 'bourgeois', nor to glorify the hero as 'neo-pagan' *The Outsider* is not at all a morbid book, it is a violent affirmation of health and sanity', writes Mr Connolly On questions of values one can only be positive and dogmatic The reader must judge whether he concurs I do not find these values violently affirmed or presented But latent in the style there are qualities of austerity and restraint which suggest that there is at least a *struggle* towards health and sanity One has only to compare the work of M Camus with that of M Sartre to feel the presence of a positive aspiration

On the other hand, the powerful grasp of his material is obtained by drastic limitation and simplification To obtain his effects, M Camus has cut off the sensibility from playing over vast areas of experience If we accept his conventions—and the unity and sobriety of the style make this easy—we still feel cheated and want to protest, very much as readers did when *Mr Tasker's Gods* first appeared *The Outsider* is M Camus's first novel To judge it unsatisfactory is not to deny its promise M Camus's philosophical attitude may be both heroic and tragic, but as expressed in this novel it falls short of being either the one or the other

For Mr Stuart Gilbert's sake one would like to think that he had based his translation on a different text from that published by Gallimard A random example will indicate what I mean

'A cinq heures, des tramways sont arrivés dans le bruit Ils ramenaient du stade de banlieue des grappes de spectateurs perchés sur les maichepieds et les rambardes Les tramways suivants ont ramené les joueurs que j'ai reconnus à leurs petites valises Ils hurlaient et chantaient à pleins poumons que leur club ne perdrait pas L'un m'a même crié "On les a eus" Et j'ai fait "Oui", en secouant la tête' —*L'Etranger*, p 34

'At five there was a loud clanging of trams They were coming from the stadium in our suburb where there had been a football match Even the back platforms were crowded and people were standing on the steps Then another tram brought back the teams I knew they were the players by the little suitcase each man carried They were bawling out their team-song, "Keep the ball rolling, boys" One of them looked up at me and shouted, "We licked them!" I waved my hand and called back, "Good work!"' —*The Outsider*, p 25

More numerous than the minor inaccuracies are the explanatory additions which rob his version of the restraint of the original Mr Gilbert occasionally inserts a cliché or uses slang where the author uses the direct simple word of ordinary speech Thus 'mon

avocat est arrivé' becomes 'my lawyer bustled in', 'il l'a ôté' (his hat) is rendered 'he whisked it off' A concierge addressing the presiding magistrate says, 'Je sais bien que j'ai eu tort Mais je n'ai pas osé refuser la cigarette que Monsieur m'a offerte' Mr Gilbert translates, 'Well, I know I didn't ought to have done it

but I did take a fag from the young gentleman when he offered it—just out of politeness'

The most extraordinary of the omissions occurs in the final scene with the prison chaplain where the 'key' to the novel is given in the phrase 'pendant toute cette vie absurde que j'avais menée' Mr Gilbert suppresses the word 'absurd' in his translation and writes simply 'all my life long' *The Outsider* should appeal to a wide public It would be a pity not to revise the translation for the next edition

In leaving the emphasis on the limitations of *The Outsider*, it is hard to determine whether the characteristic rigidity is merely a matter of technique, *i.e.*, whether the author could only dominate his subject by simplification, or whether it is caused by a fixation and hardening of his thought due to a radical want of sensibility I have referred in extenuation to the feeling that there is 'more to' the author than got itself expressed in the novel This feeling prompts one to examine the non-literary work His most recent publication is a series of four open letters to a German friend written in the years 1943-1944, years during which M Camus was helping to liberate his country They are peculiarly apposite for anyone whom the novel and the plays leave with a feeling of admiration for qualities which are guessed at rather than displayed in these works At the same time they show that M Camus is 'all of a piece throughout' and provide confirmation of the points made in reviewing the novel

First of all, the letters are highly *rhetorical* M Camus strikes and maintains throughout a sentimental attitude A very noble attitude, I hasten to add, and one which recalls the political rhetoric of Yeats and his admired master O'Leary who said, 'There are things a man must not do to save a nation' M Camus's patriotism is of the same order 'Il est des moyens qui ne s'excusent pas' Allied to and partly a result of this rhetorical approach is a terrible simplification of the issues The 'German friend' is forced into place in a convenient antithesis of black and white, so becoming a mere *repoussoir* for the purity of the French case M Camus claims that the people of France put themselves in the right by undergoing defeat, humiliation and a forced penitence 'Il nous a fallu tout ce temps pour aller voir si nous avions le droit de tuer des hommes, s'il nous était permis d'ajouter à l'atroce misère de ce monde Et c'est ce temps perdu et retrouvé, cette défaite acceptée et surmontée, ces scrupules payés par le sang, qui nous donnent le droit, à nous Français, de penser aujourd'hui, que nous étions entrés dans cette guerre les mains pures—de la pureté des victimes et des convaincus—et que nous allons sortir les mains pures—mais de la pureté, cette fois, d'une grande victoire remportée

contre l'injustice et contre nous-mêmes' We might be inclined to dismiss this with a glance at the circumstances, were it not that M Camus values intelligence as highly as courage

Indeed for the purpose in hand what makes these letters interesting is the boldness and clarity with which M Camus asserts the values which have sustained him during the years of struggle Unlike his German friend (he says) patriotism was for him only one value among others 'Nous nous faisons de notre pays une idée qui le mettait à sa place, au milieu d'autres grandeurs, l'amitié, l'homme, le bonheur, notre désir de justice' The most interesting point is that he brings out here a feature of his philosophy which is missing from *The Outsider* the element of *active revolt* The philosophy of 'the absurd' appears at first sight to be a philosophy of despair Indeed M Camus admits that this was his starting point and that he had this in common with his German friend

'Nous avons longtemps cru ensemble que ce monde n'avait pas de raison supérieure et que nous étions frustrés Je le crois encore d'une certaine manière Mais j'en ai tiré d'autres conclusions que celles dont vous me parliez alors Vous n'avez jamais cru au sens de ce monde et vous en avez tiré l'idée que tout était équivalent et que le bien et le mal se définissaient selon qu'on le voulait Vous avez supposé qu'en l'absence de toute morale humaine ou divine les seules valeurs étaient celles qui régissaient le monde animal, c'est-à-dire la violence et la ruse

vous acceptiez légèrement de désespérer et que je n'y ai jamais consenti C'est que vous admettiez assez l'injustice de notre condition pour vous résoudre à y ajouter, tandis qu'il m'apparaissait au contraire que l'homme devait affirmer la justice pour lutter contre l'injustice éternelle, créer du bonheur pour protester contre l'univers du malheur et moi, refusant d'admettre ce désespoir et ce monde torturé, je voulais seulement que les hommes retrouvent leur solidarité pour entrer en lutte contre leur destin révoltant J'ai choisi la justice au contraire, pour rester fidèle à la terre Je continue à croire que ce monde n'a pas de sens supérieur Mais je sais que quelque chose en lui a du sens et c'est l'homme, parce qu'il est le seul être à exiger d'en avoir'

He supposes his friend to ask, 'What is man?' and replies 'Mais là, je vous arrête, car nous le savons Il est cette force qui finit toujours par balancer les tyrans et les dieux'

From these ill-defined passionate statements we cannot hope to extract a philosophy But we may without indiscretion suppose that the 'fighting quality' which has here obtained the upper hand over the 'Algerian' acquiescence in inevitable doom was in part at any rate the result of participation in the underground struggle It may be that M Camus will now be able to present a man with these qualities, a hero who is capable of doing as well as suffering

THE RHYTHMICAL INTENTION IN WYATT'S POETRY¹

IT is not always realized what an extraordinary psychological problem is suggested by the conviction of literary historians that the English post-Chaucerians lost the art of metrical writing and lapsed into a kind of prose chopped up into lines. Such a complete and sudden loss of a social skill would, if it had really occurred, have been a remarkable challenge to psychological explanation. Rather rapid changes took place in the language, it is true, and there were serious political disturbances during the fifteenth century, but something cataclysmic, linguistically and politically, would have been needed to make such a loss of skill reasonably understandable. What is more, the fifteenth century produced not only the non-metrical dissertative poems of Lydgate, Occleve, Hawes and Barclay, but also a line of lyrical and often regularly metrical verse in the form of carols, nursery rhymes and the songs of the vagantes. We are asked to suppose, then, that people had the 'ear' to enjoy such rhythms, and some could compose them, but that when the most devoted followers of Chaucer came to write they suffered an unaccountable lapse of metrical skill.

Wyatt's verse summarizes the problem. As Dr Tillyard points out (*The Poetry of Sir Thomas Wyatt*, 1929), some of his work continues the tradition of the flowing, lyrical verse of the fifteenth century carols, but much of it shows what Tillyard calls 'unconscious roughnesses' derived from the manner of Hawes and Barclay. The views of literary critics on these features of Wyatt's verse have varied from time to time, but they have all been based on the assumption that his intention was to write the flowing, metrical verse which established itself as the standard for English poetry in the Elizabethan period.

Puttenham first formulated the assumption in saying that Surrey and Wyatt 'did greatly polish our rude and homely manner of vulgar poesie from that it had been before, and for this cause may justly be sayd the first reformers of our English metre and style' (*Arte of English Poesie*). Miss A. K. Foxwell some three hundred years later spoke of Wyatt as 'the pioneer of our modern poetry. It was he who brought order out of chaos and re-established the line of five stresses' (*A Study of Sir Thomas Wyatt's Poems*, 1911). But there was always the unspoken proviso

¹The substance of a paper read to the Doughty Society, Downing College, November, 1945.

that his efforts were fumbling and that he often failed in the ordering and polishing for which he strove. So for a long time his editors, from Tottel to Quiller-Couch, cheerfully completed the polishing process and altered Wyatt's wording for the sake of metrical regularity and smoothness.

Miss Foxwell followed a different path. Her scrupulous editing was marked by irreconcilable hostility to the convenient distortions of Tottel and the rest, and the text she offers must be close to what Wyatt wrote. But as a critic she took over the familiar assumption that Wyatt aimed at metrical regularity. Instead of altering his words, in the manner of Tottel, she postulated systems of pronunciation, especially accentuation, and an amazing array of metrical rules and licences (supposed to have been derived from Pynson's Chaucer) which allowed her to believe that Wyatt was, in spite of all appearances, actually achieving a regular metre. She lists fifteen so-called rules of versification, thirteen of which (and many more if sub-divisions are included) are simply common practices in Wyatt's writing which are *not* capable of being fitted into a regular metrical scheme (*Study*, pp. 40-49). The natural conclusion is that he had no such regular scheme in mind. Foxwell's plan was to regard these practices as permitted deviations and to suppose that once you have called them this you can go on believing that he wrote metrically.

Some of the readings which result are extraordinary. In the following examples the first version indicates (with exaggerated pauses) what I take to be a rhythmical grouping of syllables in the line as Wyatt wrote it, the second is Tottel's metrical version, the third is Foxwell's proposed scansion (marked exactly as she indicates it in the *Study*) to make them, with a few 'licences', into iambic pentameters.

I Ther was never ffile half so well filed,
(Tottel) Was never file yet half so well yfiled,
(Foxwell) Ther was név | er ffile | hálf | so wéll | filéd

II And the reward little trust for ever,
(Tottel) And the reward is litle trust for ever,
(Foxwell) And thé rewárd littlé trust for évér

III I served the not to be forsaken,
(Tottel) I served the not that I should be forsaken,
(Foxwell) I sér | ved thé | not tó | be fór | sakén

It has to be noticed that in spite of all the talk about Romance accentuation and the changing value of the final '-e' (where evidence can be adduced), there seems to be no philological evidence for the majority of the distorted accentuations offered by Foxwell. Their only support is the initial assumption that Wyatt wrote in regular metre. Hence completely arbitrary changes are suggested

in the pronunciation of the same word when it occurs in different poems, for no reason except that metrical regularity would require the change. For example, Foxwell says that in a line from Sonnet 2—

With his hardines taketh displeasur—

'hardines, l 8, has the Romance accent on the second syllable', but of Sonnet 15—

With soie repentaunce of his hardines—

she says 'hardines has modern accent here'. Again, she remarks (*Study*, p. 43) that 'ayn' (in words such as rayn and fayn) is 'often' dissyllabic, 'and pleasure in one instance [my italics] has three syllables'. This different accentuation in one passage and another has no shadow of support except the sheer assumption that regular metre was intended.

Moreover, many of the poems show perfectly smooth, regular rhythms when the words are pronounced in the modern way. Miss Foxwell believes (without satisfactory evidence, according to Sir Edmund Chambers) that these are later works, and therefore says (*Poems*, Vol. I, vi) 'His earlier poems, to be rightly understood, must be read with the earlier style of pronunciation, namely with the romance accents. His later poetry conforms to the modern style'. Once again the philological question of the pronunciation has been begged by the critical assumption that he must at all times have been trying to write in regular metre.

Miss Foxwell seems to stand alone in her conviction of Wyatt's metrical regularity. Saintsbury, writing before her *Study* appeared, saw no sign of it, nor does either Tillyard or Chambers writing more recently. The latter says of the translations and paraphrases, 'This division of Wyatt's work furnishes something of a puzzle. Much of it, especially in the sonnets, is stiff and difficult to scan, and even when full allowance has been made, both for Romance accentuation and for textual corruption, many lines can only be regarded as simply unmetrical'. Attempts have been made to explain these derivative poems as prentice-work, in which Wyatt was fumbling his way to a comprehension of the pentameter, with the help of a text of Chaucer perverted by oblivion of the Chauceran inflections. I cannot say that I find them plausible' (*Sir Thomas Wyatt and some collected studies*, 1933). Tillyard simply notes the 'unconscious roughnesses' of some of Wyatt, in contrast to other effective and significant deviations from regular rhythm, he makes no attempt to defend them or explain them away and he regards them as a hangover from similar roughnesses in such fifteenth century poets as Hawes and Barclay.

In their view of Wyatt's metrical intention, these two recent opinions are close to that of Saintsbury who (*Cambridge History of English Literature*, III), after praising Wyatt and Surrey as those 'in whom the reformation of English verse first distinctly appears', goes on to say 'But it is quite clear that even they still have

great difficulty in adjusting rhythm to pronunciation. They "wrench accent" in the fashion which Gascoigne was to rebuke in the next (almost the same) generation. And these modern views are in a direct line of descent from Tottel. We no longer alter Wyatt's words to make the line scan, and we see (as Tillyard does for instance) the admirable effect achieved by some of his 'irregularities'. Basically, however, we assume that he did his best to write metrically but marred his work with rather frequent bungling.

It is this idea which, considered seriously, is so startling. Is it really possible to believe that a writer who shows such exquisite management of rhythm in some of his verse could have been reduced by the mere difficulty of manipulating language to such elementary failures of metrical writing as the critics think they see in other parts of his work? The very notion that he progressed slowly, with laborious practice, towards metre is unpalatable. Emphatic metrical schemes are among the earliest forms of composition, and both children and 'primitive' peoples master them readily. It is true that exceptional polish of simple metres may represent one form of literary sophistication, as in Dryden and Pope, but advancing skill and command of language may equally lead to increasing irregularity, as of course in Shakespeare. Whatever chronology may ultimately be accepted for Wyatt's poems it will not in itself prove that he wrote the irregular lines because metre was too difficult to compass, because he had 'great difficulty in adjusting rhythm to pronunciation'.

To my mind it is impossible to believe that Wyatt could not quite easily have made his irregular lines regular had he wished. Fifteen years after his death Tottel's *Miscellany* came out, with very trivial and obvious changes which put the metre straight. Can we believe that changes which came so easily to Tottel or his hack had been impossibly difficult to a man like Wyatt fifteen or twenty years earlier, or that Wyatt had failed to detect the missing or redundant syllable or the reversed accent in the lines that Tottel 'corrected'? In the poem from prison, 'Sighes ar my foode' the first two lines run

Sighes ar my foode drinke are my teares
Clynkinge of fetters suche musycke wolde crave

Tottel changes the second to

Clynkinge of fetters would such Musick crave

Three lines further on Wyatt writes

Rayne, wynde or wether I judge by myne eares

and Tottel changes this to

Rayne, wynde or wether judge I by myne eares

Would alterations of this kind have been beyond Wyatt's skill, or the necessity for them beyond his perception?

Consider a most revealing change in the poem 'Alas madame for stelyng of a kysse' Wyatt's fifth and sixth lines run

Then revenge you and the next way is this
An othr kysse shall have my lyffe endid

Tottle alters the fifth line to

Revenge you then, the rediest way is this

But the revealing fact is that Wyatt's version was itself a revision—his own revision—of what he first wrote, and what he first wrote was just as regular as Tottel, it ran

Revenge you then and sure ye shall not mysse
To have my life with an othr ended

In other words, Wyatt deliberately altered it from metrical regularity to what it now is

It seems very probable that when Wyatt didn't write in regular metre it was because he didn't want to. If we take this view we are left with the question, What did he aim at in the so-called 'awkward' rhythms? How are we to read the lines? Where we have no fixed metrical scheme to guide us, it seems that the simplest alternative is to follow speech rhythms, and to group the words into rhythm units suggested partly by the sense and partly by convenience in forming the sounds of the words. The speech rhythm we adopt must be affected by anything we really know about pronunciation in Wyatt's time, but it ought not to be based on 'rules of pronunciation' derived from the assumption that he wrote in metre.

Before going further I have to say what I mean by a rhythm unit. The experience of rhythm is not the passive recording of some pattern of time intervals but an active process, the process of rhythmization. It is one kind of mental unifying activity: a number of impressions that would otherwise be merely a sequence can, if rhythmized, be perceived as an organized whole. It is perceived as a unit, distinguished from its background, and it has a structure or pattern, depending on the fact that the component impressions are differentiated within the rhythm unit, some standing out and others being subordinate. A simple example of rhythmization is the hearing of the regular and equal sounds of a clock as 'tick-tock'. This is subjective rhythmization. More usually the differentiation of one sound from another is brought about by objective differences—of loudness, duration, length of interval and so on. But what creates the differences is a subsidiary point: all that matters is that the component impressions of the rhythm unit are in fact perceived as different from one another, so that a pattern is apparent in the unit.

This unification of sensory impressions is independent of their having any meaning—of their 'standing for' or referring to anything outside themselves, a meaningless sequence of syllables can

be rhythmized. Further, the unification brought about by rhythmization is, for conscious experience, immediate, and though conscious activities (such as counting) may help to bring it about, yet when it does occur it will appear as an 'immediate fact of sensory apprehension' (R. MacDougall, *Psychological Monographs*, IV, 17). It is well known that once rhythmization in a certain pattern has been established it tends to recur in that pattern very readily, but this fact is not essential in the definition of rhythm, and it is important not to confuse rhythmization with the *repetition* of a rhythm unit (as for example in metre).

The rhythm units in ordinary speech and prose are very varied in structure, not regularly repeated, not emphasized strongly, and not much attended to. When our attention is caught by a speech rhythm it is generally in the form of a short phrase in which a sense unit and a rhythm unit coincide, and often one in which a well marked attitude or emotion is expressed, for instance, 'What a day!', 'Believe it or not', 'Did you really?', 'You mark my words'. Slogans have the same characteristic. Advertisers have also noticed that if the flow of prose is broken and rhythm units given prominence by typographical devices, the effect is to claim more attention for the rhythms and the way they emphasize the sense. A series of advertisements for National Savings in 1945 put their message in such forms as

Never before
in a few years
have the people of Britain
achieved so much
Never before
etc

Advertising of this kind was derived from the serious use made of the same device by the writers of free verse, who employed additional means of concentrating sense and feeling, such as the omission of inessential words, the repetition of grammatical constructions and so on.

The young today are born prisoners,
poor things, and they know it
Born in a universal workhouse,
and they feel it
Inheriting a sort of confinement,
work, and prisoners' routine
and prisoners' flat, ineffectual pastime

(D. H. Lawrence, *Pansies*)

In one way and another, through serious and trivial experiments, we are now familiar with the effects of heightened significance that may be gained by emphasizing the rhythmical units which underlie ordinary speech and prose.

Normally these units are kept flowing into one another and

losing their outlines¹ The flow occurs, I think, through the fact that certain words can readily form a rhythmical unit with either the preceding or the following words, and they thus partly bridge the pause between two smaller units Consider a piece of Henry James' prose, printed with an exaggerated indication of the just perceptible pauses that seem to me to give the most natural grouping of words for ordinary reading

'The river—had always—for Hyacinth—a deep attraction
—The ambiguous appeal he had felt—as a child—in all the
aspects of London—came back to him—from the dark detail of
its banks—and the sordid—agitation of its bosom' (*The Princess Casamassima*)

I have indicated what seems to me a natural grouping, but other groupings are almost equally possible and to other readers may seem preferable

For example, instead of 'The ambiguous appeal he had felt—as a child', we could read 'The ambiguous appeal—he had felt as a child' There are here two rhythmical nuclei—one 'The ambiguous appeal', the other 'as a child'—and the phrase 'he had felt' will attach itself with almost equal ease to either Again, in the quotation as I have given it, some of the larger groupings are themselves made up of smaller rhythmical nuclei connected by these floating words Thus the phrase 'from the dark detail of its banks' has the two nuclei 'from the dark' and 'of its banks', and the word 'detail' can attach itself to either nucleus 'from the dark detail—of its banks' or 'from the dark—detail of its banks' In this way a kind of competition between one rhythmical unit and another deprives both of any close attention or emphasis and creates the fairly steady flow of prose, with pauses marking only the main divisions of the sense

In completely metrical verse there is equally a continuous flowing from one rhythmical unit to the next, but because the successive units have the same internal structure—the same number of syllables and pattern of accents—we still have the outline of the rhythmical unit brought emphatically to our attention Against this suggested background of repeated identical units the writer then introduces deviations for special effects But his groundwork is the continuous flow throughout the line, with only a slight pause at the caesura

Now a characteristic of free verse, and of many of Wyatt's irregular rhythms, is that the rhythmical units will not flow continuously from one to another It is pausing verse instead of

¹I am grateful to Professor F C Bartlett for pointing out that in an earlier paper (*British Journal of Psychology*, 1932) the account I gave of rhythm units offered no explanation of the continuous flow from one unit to another The present notes are a belated beginning at finding some explanation

flowing verse In free verse the pauses are largely secured by the typographical device of the line ending In the verse of *Piers Plowman*, the pause-mark is used, besides the line ending But these scribal and typographic devices are not always necessary, because sometimes the structure of the successive rhythmical units is itself enough to prevent any flowing of one into the other A few lines from *Piers Plowman* will illustrate the point

For hunger hiderward hasteth hym faste,
He shal awake with water wastoures to chaste

In the first lines the pause-mark only emphasizes what might be the caesura in a flowing, metrical line But the second line is divided by a complete pause, like a rest in music In the next two lines of the poem also the pause-mark and the line ending divide rhythmical units that are not meant to flow together

Ar fyve yere be fulfilled suche famyn shal aryse,
Thorwgh flodes and thourgh foule wederes frutes shal faille

(Passus VI, 323-326)

If we try to make them flow continuously we are tripped up with surplus syllables or unexpected accents Each separate section of the lines forms a satisfying rhythmical unit by itself, but because each is of different rhythmical structure there is no smooth flow either from one section of the line to the other or from one line to the next It is verse that depends on a pause between successive rhythmical units

This pausing verse has much in common with plainsong The music complicates the question by sometimes giving an unnatural or exaggerated accentuation, but the main effect is similar the words are divided up into rhythmical units of diverse structure which therefore have to be clearly separated from one another by a pause 'As it was in the beginning—is now—and ever shall be' The 'parallelism' adopted in the translation of the Psalms further reinforces the tradition of balanced but distinct units as a satisfactory mode of treating language And, as the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* article on plainsong points out, the absence of a regularly repeated rhythm allies plainsong 'with such things as sea-chanties, counting-out rhymes, and the like'

Within this strong English tradition much of Wyatt's verse takes its place, with two (or possibly more) diverse rhythmical units included in one line In much of his verse, of course, units of similar structure are brought together and then the line flows, becoming regular and metrical But it seems evident that Wyatt had no conception that the pausing rhythm was in any way incorrect or unsatisfactory It would not have been beyond his skill to turn it into flowing rhythm had he wished

The first poem in Miss Foxwell's edition illustrates clearly the general plan of two balancing rhythmical units in a line, with a pause dividing them It is particularly interesting on account

of the heavy punctuation in the manuscript (reproduced in facsimile) which emphasizes the pauses between the rhythmical units

Behold, love, thy power how she despiseth
 my great payne how litle she regardeth
 the holy oth, whereof she taketh no cure
 broken she hath and yet, she bideth sure,
 right at her ease and litle she dredeth
 Wepened thou art and she unarmed sitteth
 To the disdaynfull, her liff she ledeth
 To me spitefull, withoute cause, or mesur
 Behold, love

I ame in hold if pitie the meveth
 Goo, bend thy bowe that stony hertes breketh
 And, with some stroke, revenge the displeasur
 of the, and him that sorrowe doeth endur
 And, as his lorde, the lowly, entreateth
 Behold, love

Another poem (later, according to Miss Foxwell) is worth quoting because although it has little intrinsic interest it shows how readily Wyatt would introduce pausing lines in a poem where most of the lines were flowing

Venemus thornes that ar so sharp and kene,
 Sometyne ber flowers fayre and fresh of hue
 Poyson offtyme is put in medecene,
 And causith helth in man for to renue
 Ffire that purgith allthing that is unclene,
 May hele and hurt and if thes bene true,
 I trust sometyne my harme may be my helth
 Syns evry wo is joynd with some welth

In most of these lines the pause between the rhythmical units is reduced to the caesura of flowing verse, but in lines 5 and 6 it recovers its full value because the units it divides are too dissimilar to flow together Tottel's emendations are extended even to the earlier lines so as to reduce still further the suggestion of two separate units and to bring each line into an even more continuous flow, giving minimal value to the caesura

line 2 beur flowers we se full fresh and faire of hue
 line 3 poison is also put in medecene
 line 4 and unto man his helth doth off renue
 line 5 The fier that all thinges else consumeth clene
 line 6 May hele and hurt then if that this be true

I should say that in a case like this the difference between Wyatt and Tottel is a complete difference in rhythmical principle. It is not that Tottel established the metrical regularity after which Wyatt was clumsily groping, it is not that he crudely ironed out subtle variations that Wyatt had introduced into a metrical scheme,

and it is not that he misunderstood a system of pronunciation which had once made the poems scan correctly. The difference is that Tottel's generation had fully accepted the metrical principle of the flowing line and had turned its back completely on the pausing, balanced line.

Inevitably the versifiers of the new generation went too far towards mechanical regularity, and a passage in *Henry IV, Part I*—which has no doubt often been cited by students of prosody—gives with effective illustration the contrast between the insipid regularity of much early Elizabethan verse and on the other hand the vigour of writing which allows its rhythmical units some of the diversity of structure that marks both speech and pausing verse. First comes Glendower's speech, a parody of Tottel (including the syllabic '-ed' in line 3), and then Hotspur's explicit criticism of it, in verse that finely exemplifies an alternative

Glendower I can speak English, lord, as well as you,
 For I was trained up at the English court,
 Where being but young, I framed to the harp
 Many an English ditty, lovely well,
 And gave the tongue a helpful ornament,—
 A virtue that was never seen in you

Hotspur Marry, and I'm glad of it with all my heart
 I had rather be a kitten, and cry mew,
 Than one of these same metre ballad-mongers,
 I had rather hear a brazen canstick turn'd,
 Or a dry wheel grate on the axle-tree,
 And that would set my teeth nothing on edge,
 Nothing so much as mincing poetry —
 Tis like the forced gait of a shuffling nag

(Act III, Sc 1)

Wyatt comes at the turning point of the change in rhythmical intention, and his writing includes both flowing and pausing lines. It may be that he came to prefer the flowing line, only a reliable chronology of his work could decide. Whatever the answer, there seems to me little doubt that in many of his poems, early or late (and probably both), he positively chose the pausing line composed of dissimilar rhythmical units. Many difficulties no doubt remain, even if we accept this view. (The Sonnets, for one thing, need further explanation. Whether or not Wyatt fully understood the principles of the Italian verse on which he modelled them, it looks as if he was experimenting in most of them with lines of a fixed number of syllables, with little regard for accent—as if the old pausing verse was being complicated and spoilt by mechanical fixity in the number of syllables). However, it seems to be a step forward if we have something to put in place of the unpalatable—I think untenable—theory of an extraordinary loss of skill that put regular metres beyond the reach of English writers from Chaucer's death to Tottel's *Miscellany*.

In fact, of course, even the orthodox scholars have had their doubts about this theory, even when they have helped to popularize it. Saintsbury, who seems to have done most to establish the view of fifteenth-century poets as writers of a barbarous pseudo-verse, himself admits that the supposed facts present a puzzle which has not been entirely explained. After referring to the futility of trying 'to get the verses of Lydgate, Occleve and the rest into any kind of rhythmical system, satisfactory at once to calculation and audition' (1), he goes on, 'And yet we know that almost all these writers had Chaucer constantly before them and regarded him with the highest admiration, and we know further, that his followers in Scotland managed to imitate him with very considerable precision. No real or full explanation of this singular decadence has ever yet been given, probably none is possible' (*Cambridge History of English Literature*, III).

Most people would agree, given Saintsbury's premises. But the insoluble problem exists only if we beg the real question and assume with Saintsbury that it is simply a 'singular decadence' that we have to explain. The alternative possibility is that these poets were trying to do something different from Chaucer (or from Skeat's reading of Chaucer). Saintsbury almost says that this was so. He offers two partial explanations of the 'singular decadence'. One is the familiar story of the syllabic final '-e' and its obsolescence. The other, much more to the point, is that during this period there was a widespread revival of alliterative-accentual verse, verse which depended not on a flowing line but on rhythmical units, divided if necessary by a pause. If we are rigidly committed, as Saintsbury was, to a system of metrical scansion, with the iambic pentameter as the chief criterion of rhythmical excellence, we are bound to regard fifteenth century verse as a decadence and as evidence of lost skill. But to the writers concerned it derived from a long tradition of native verse, reinforced by the tradition of liturgical chanting.

We may think that what they did was a failure. The varied uses of the dissertative poems, as vehicles for sermons, political discussions, scientific and medical dissertations, fiction and narrative, encouraged a loss of interest in the rhythmical aspect of writing and allowed it to become more and more prosy. At the same time, the loss of rhythmical quality in fifteenth century writers as a whole is not so extreme as one would gather from critics like Saintsbury.

Some examples of what he calls doggerel are far from being as futile, rhythmically, as he finds them, especially since they occur in plays, where the variety of speech rhythm has special claims. He quotes from Heywood's *Husband, Wife and Priest*

But by my soul I never go to Sir John
 But I find him like a holy man,
 For either he is saying his devotion,
 Or else he is going in procession,

where the effect seems to be of emphatic repudiation and a hasty mustering of evidence (I have again exaggerated the slight reading pauses) But Saintsbury says the first two lines are pseudo-octosyllabics, and then complains that 'the very next lines slide into pseudo-heroics' Continuing with this obsessional prosody he gives from Bale's *Kyng Johan* an example of what he calls pseudo-alexandrines

Monkes, chanons and nones in divers colours and shape,
Both whyte, blacke, and pyed, God send their increase yll
happe

The effectiveness of this vigorous writing depends on our accepting the principle of a pause or rest between rhythmical units This is what Saintsbury particularly disliked, as giving what he called the 'broken-backed line' He quotes an example from Hawes

The minde of men chaungeth as the mone,

which again, read naturally, has a satisfying rhythmical quality

In the period that separates us from the time when Saintsbury was writing and forming his taste there have been the free verse movement and all its derivatives, the appearance of Hopkins' poems, a new appreciation of Donne, and Graves' insistence on the interest of Skelton's verse (which Saintsbury instanced as fifteenth century doggerel) By all these means, and no doubt others, we have been led away from the assumption that smoothly flowing metrical verse is the standard for all poetry But in speaking of variations and licence and 'free' verse we have still been inclined to adopt a negative view of non-metrical verse—we have regarded it as a 'departure from' some established norm

What I have been suggesting is that we have in the tradition of our language a positively different mode of rhythmical organization Some of the most effective of the so-called 'deviations' from metrical norms might be better understood in terms of the other rhythmical principle A possible instance comes from Henry King's 'Exequy' The metrical framework consists in four iambic feet to a line

Accept thou Shrine of my dead Saint,
Instead of Dirges this complaint

But what do we gain by describing the following lines in terms of licences within or deviations from the metrical scheme?—

But heark! My pulse like a soft Drum
Beats my approach, tells *Thee* I come,

Even from the prosodic point of view it seems that the lines could best be described in terms of rhythmical units rather than metrical feet

At any rate I suggest that the non-metrical forms of verse, and the related modes of handling language, deserve a closer—

and still more a friendlier—study than they have received from orthodox prosody. In any such study Wyatt's work should have an important place. He was at home in both kinds of rhythmical organization and came at a turning point when the flowing metrical style gained a supreme place in English verse, but not such exclusive control of it as some prosodists have thought.

D W HARDING

GEORGE ELIOT (IV)

'DANIEL DERONDA' AND 'THE PORTRAIT OF A LADY'

IN no other of her works is the association of the strength with the weakness so remarkable or so unfortunate as in *Daniel Deronda*. It is so peculiarly unfortunate, not because the weakness spoils the strength—the two stand apart, on a large scale, in fairly neatly separable masses, but because the mass of fervid and wordy unreality seems to have absorbed most of the attention the book has ever had, and to be all that is remembered of it. That this should be so shows, I think, how little George Eliot's acceptance has rested upon a critical recognition of her real strength and distinction, and how unfair to her, in effect, is the conventional overvaluing of her early work. For if the nature of her real strength and distinction had been appreciated for what it is, so magnificent an achievement as the good half of *Daniel Deronda* could not have failed to compel an admiration that would have established it, not the less for the astonishing badness of the bad half, among the great things in fiction.

It will be best to get the bad half out of the way first. This can be quickly done, since the weakness doesn't require any sustained attention, being of a kind that has already been thoroughly discussed. It is represented by Deronda himself, and by what may be called in general the Zionist inspiration¹. In these inspirations her intelligence and real moral insight are not engaged. But she is otherwise wholly engaged—how wholly and how significantly being brought further home to us when we note that Deronda's racial mission finds itself identified with his love for Mirah, so that he is eventually justified in the 'sweet irresistible hopefulness that the best of human possibilities might befall him—the blending of a complete personal love in one current with a larger duty.

¹At this point a part of the essay as intended for publication in book form has been omitted.

All in the book that issues from this inspiration is unreal and impotently wordy in the way discussed earlier in connection with Dorothea—though *Middlemarch* can show nothing to match the wastes of biblicality and fervid idealism ('Revelations') devoted to Mordecai, or the copious and dreadfully comic impossibility of the working-men's club (Chapter CXLII), or the utterly routing Shakespearean sprightliness of Hans Meyrick's letter in Chapter LII. The Meyricks who, while not being direct products of the prophetic afflatus, are subordinate ministers to it, are among those elements in George Eliot that seem to come from Dickens rather than from life, and so is the pawnbroker's family—the humour and tenderness are painfully trying, with that quality they have, that obviousness of intention, which relates them so intimately to the presiding solemnity they subserve.

No more need be said about the weak and bad side of *Daniel Deronda*. By way of laying due stress upon the astonishingly contrasting strength and fineness of the large remainder, the way in which George Eliot transcends in it not only her weakness, but what are commonly thought to be her limitations, I will make an assertion of fact and a critical comparison. Henry James wouldn't have written *The Portrait of a Lady* if he hadn't read *Gwendolen Harleth* (as I shall call the good part of *Daniel Deronda*), and, of the pair of closely comparable works, George Eliot's has not only the distinction of having come first, it is decidedly the greater. The fact, once asserted, can hardly be questioned. Henry James wrote his 'Conversation' on *Daniel Deronda* in 1876, and he began *The Portrait of a Lady* 'in the spring of 1879'. No one who considers both the intense appreciative interest he shows in *Gwendolen Harleth* and the extraordinary resemblance of his own theme to George Eliot's (so that *The Portrait of a Lady* might fairly be called a variation) is likely to suggest that this resemblance is accidental and non-significant.

Isabel Archer is Gwendolen and Osmond is Grandcourt—the parallel, in scheme, at any rate, is very close and very obvious. As for the individual characters, that Osmond is Grandcourt is a proposition less likely to evoke protest than the other. And there are certainly more important differences between Isabel and Gwendolen than between Osmond and Grandcourt—a concession that, since the woman is the protagonist and the centre of interest, may seem to be a very favourably significant one in respect of James's originality. The differences, however, as I see them are fairly suggested by saying that Isabel Archer is Gwendolen Harleth seen by a man. And it has to be added that, in presenting such a type, George Eliot has a woman's advantage.

To say that, in the comparison, James's presentment is seen to be sentimental won't, perhaps, quite do, but it is, I think, seen to be partial in both senses of the word—controlled, that is, by a vision that is both incomplete and indulgent, so that we have to grant George Eliot's presentment an advantage in reality. Here it may be protested that James is *not* presenting Gwendolen Harleth,

but another girl, and that he is perfectly within his rights in choosing a type that is more wholly sympathetic. That, no doubt, is what James intended to do in so far as he had Gwendolen Harleth in mind. But that he had her in mind at all consciously, so that he thought of himself as attempting a variation on George Eliot's theme, seems to me very unlikely. The inspiration, or challenge, he was conscious of was some girl encountered in actual life

'a perfect picture of youthfulness—its eagerness, its presumption, its preoccupation with itself, its vanity and silliness, its sense of its own absoluteness. But she is extremely intelligent and clever, and therefore tragedy *can* have a hold on her'

This, as a matter of fact, is James's description of Gwendolen (given through Theodora, the most sympathetic of the three *personae* of the 'Conversation', who is here—as the style itself shows—endorsed by the judicially central Constantius) there seems no need to insist further that there is point in saying that Isabel Archer is Gwendolen Harleth seen by a man—or that Gwendolen is Isabel seen by a woman. For clearly, in the girl so described there must have been (even if we think of her as Isabel Archer—in whom James doesn't *see* vanity and silliness) expressions of her 'pre-occupation with self' and her 'sense of her own absoluteness' justifying observations and responses more critical and unsympathetic than any offered by James. It isn't that George Eliot shows any animus towards Gwendolen, simply, as a very intelligent woman she is able, unlimited by masculine partiality of vision, and only the more perceptive because a woman, to achieve a much *completer* presentment of her subject than James of his. This strength which manifests itself in sum as completeness affects us locally as a greater specificity, an advantage which, when considered, turns out to be also an advantage over James in consistency. And, as a matter of fact, a notable specificity marks the strength of her mature art in general.

This strength appears in her rendering of country-house and 'county' society compared with James's. Here we have something that is commonly supposed to lie outside her scope. Her earlier life having been what it was, and her life as a practising novelist having been spent with G. H. Lewes, 'cut off from the world' ('the loss for a novelist was serious', says Mrs. Woolf), what can she have known of the 'best society, where no one makes an invidious display of anything in particular, and the advantages of the world are taken with that high-bred depreciation which follows from being accustomed to them' (her own words)? The answer is that, however she came by her knowledge, she can, on the showing of *Daniel Deronda*, present that world with such fulness and reality as to suggest that she knows it as completely and inwardly as she knows *Middlemarch*. James himself was much impressed by this aspect of her strength. Of the early part of George Eliot's book he says (through Constantius) 'I delighted in its deep, rich English tone, in which so many notes seemed melted together'

The stress should fall on the 'many notes' rather than on the 'melted', for what James is responding to is the specificity and completeness of the rendering, whereas 'melted' suggests an assimilating mellowness, charming and conciliating the perceptions, a suffusing richness, bland and emollient. George Eliot's richness is not of that kind: she has too full and strong a sense of the reality, she sees too clearly and understandingly, sees with a judging vision that relates everything to her profoundest moral experience: her full living sense of value is engaged, and sensitively responsive. It isn't that she doesn't appreciate the qualities that so appeal to Henry James: she renders them at least as well as he—renders them better, in the sense that she 'places' them (a point very intimately related to the other, that her range of 'notes' is much wider than his). It is true that, as Virginia Woolf says, 'She is no satirist'. But the reason given, 'The movement of her mind was too slow and cumbersome to lend itself to comedy', shows that Mrs. Woolf hadn't read *Daniel Deronda*—and can't have read other things at all perceptively. If George Eliot is no satirist it is not because she hasn't the quickness, the delicacy of touch and the precision. And it certainly is not that she hasn't the perceptions and responses that go to make satire. Consider, for instance, the interview between Gwendolen and her uncle, the Reverend Mr. Gascoigne ('man of the world turned clergyman'), in Chapter XIII.

'This match with Grandcourt presented itself to him as a sort of public affair, perhaps there were ways in which it might even strengthen the Establishment. To the Rector, whose father (nobody would have suspected it, and nobody was told) had risen to be a provincial corn-dealer, aristocratic heirship resembled regal heirship in excepting its possessor from the ordinary standard of moral judgments, Grandcourt, the almost certain baronet, the probable peer, was to be ranged with public personages, and was a match to be accepted on broad general grounds national and ecclesiastical. But if Grandcourt had really made any deeper or more unfortunate experiments in folly than were common in young men of high prospects, he was of an age to have finished them. All accounts can be suitably wound up when a man has not ruined himself, and the expense may be taken as an insurance against future error. This was the view of practical wisdom, with reference to higher views, repentance had a supreme moral and religious value. There was every reason to believe that a woman of well-regulated mind would be happy with Grandcourt.'

' "Is he disagreeable to you personally?"

"No."

"Have you heard anything of him which has affected you disagreeably?" The Rector thought it impossible that Gwendolen could have heard the gossip he had heard, but in any case he

must endeavour to put all things in the right light for her

"I have heard nothing about him except that he is a great match" said Gwendolen, with some sauciness, "and that affects me very agreeably"

"Then, my dear Gwendolen, I have nothing further to say than this you hold your fortune in your own hands—a fortune such as rarely happens to a girl in your circumstances—a fortune in fact which almost takes the question out of the range of mere personal feeling, and makes your acceptance of it a duty If Providence offers you power and position—especially when unclogged by any conditions that are repugnant to you—your course is one of responsibility, into which caprice must not enter A man does not like to have his attachment trifled with he may not be at once repelled—these things are matters of individual disposition But the trifling may be carried too far And I must point out to you that in case Mr Grandcourt were repelled without your having refused him—without your having intended ultimately to refuse him, your situation would be a humiliating and painful one I, for my part, should regard you with severe disapprobation, as the victim of nothing else than your own coquetry and folly"

Gwendolen became pallid as she listened to this admonitory speech The ideas it raised had the force of sensations Her resistant courage would not help here here, because her uncle was not urging her against her own resolve, he was pressing upon her the motives of dread which she already felt, he was making her more conscious of the risks that lay within herself She was silent, and the Rector observed that he had produced some strong effect

"I mean this in kindness, my dear" His tone had softened

"I am aware of that, uncle", said Gwendolen, rising and shaking her head back, as if to rouse herself out of painful passivity "I am not foolish I know that I must be married some time—before it is too late And I don't see how I could do better than marry Mr Grandcourt I mean to accept him, if possible" She felt as if she were reinforcing herself by speaking with this decisiveness to her uncle

But the Rector was a little startled by so bare a version of his own meaning from those young lips He wished that in her mind his advice should be taken in an infusion of sentiments proper to a girl, and such as are presupposed in the advice of a clergyman, although he may not consider them always appropriate to be put forward He wished his niece parks, carriages, a title—everything that would make this world a pleasant abode, but he wished her not to be cynical—to be, on the contrary, religiously dutiful, and have warm domestic affections

"My dear Gwendolen", he said, rising also, and speaking with benignant gravity "I trust that you will find in marriage a new fountain of duty and affection Marriage is the only true

and satisfactory sphere of a woman, and if your marriage with Mr Grandcourt should be happily decided upon, you will have probably an increasing power, both of rank and wealth, which may be used for the benefit of others. These considerations are something higher than romance. You are fitted by natural gifts for a position which, considering your birth and early prospects, could hardly be looked forward to as in the ordinary course of things, and I trust that you will grace it not only by those personal gifts, but by a good and consistent life."

"I hope Mamma will be the happier", said Gwendolen, in a more cheerful way, lifting her hands backward to her neck, and moving towards the door. She wanted to waive those higher considerations'

This is Samuel Butler's matter, and taken by itself, not, in effect, altogether remote from Samuel Butler's mode. The presentment of the Rector here is directly satirical—at any rate, it might very well have come from a satirical novel. But even within the passage quoted there are signs (notably in the short narrative passage describing Gwendolen's state of mind) adverting us that the author isn't a satirist. And we know from his appearances elsewhere that her total attitude towards Mr Gascoigne is very far from being satirical, she shows him as an impressive and on the whole admirable figure. 'cheerful, successful worldliness', she tells us, 'has a false air of being more selfish than the acrid, unsuccessful kind, whose secret history is summed up in the terrible words "Sold, but not paid for"'. And Mr Gascoigne not only has strong family feeling and a generous sense of duty, but shows himself in adversity not only admirably practical, but admirably unselfish. George Eliot sees too much and has too strong a sense of the real (as well as too much self-knowledge and too adequate and constant a sense of her own humanity) to be a satirist.

The kind of complexity and completeness, the fulness of vision and response, represented by her Mr Gascoigne characterizes her rendering in general of the world to which he belongs. Henry James's presentment of what is essentially the same world is seen, in the comparison, to have entailed much excluding and simplifying. His is a subtle art, and he has his irony, but the irony doesn't mean inclusiveness—an adequacy to the complexities of the real in its concrete fulness, it doesn't mark a complex valuing process that has for upshot a total attitude in which all the elements of a full response are brought together. His art (in presenting this world in *The Portrait of a Lady*, I mean) seems to leave out all such perceptions as evoke the tones and facial expressions with which we register the astringent and unpalatable. The irony is part of the subtlety of the art by which, while being so warmly concrete in effect, he can, without challenge, be so limited and selective, and, what is an essential condition of his selectiveness, so lacking in specificity compared with George Eliot. His world of 'best society' and country house is, for all its life and charm, immeasur-

ably less real (the word has a plain enough force here, and will bear pondering) than George Eliot's. He idealizes, and his idealizing is a matter of not seeing, and not knowing (or not taking into account), a great deal of the reality. And it seems to me that we have essentially this kind of idealizing in his Isabel Archer, she stands to Gwendolen Harleth as James's 'best society' does to George Eliot's.

In saying this, of course, I am insisting on the point of comparing Gwendolen with Isabel. The point is to bring out the force of James's own tribute (paid through Constantius) to the characteristic strength of George Eliot's art as exhibited in her protagonist.

'And see how the girl is known, inside out, how thoroughly she is felt and understood. It is the most *intelligent* thing in all George Eliot's writing, and that is saying much. It is so deep, so true, so complete, it holds such a wealth of psychological detail, it is more than masterly.'

It would hardly be said of Isabel Archer that the presentment of her is complete, it is characteristic of James's art to have made her an effective enough presence for his purpose without anything approaching a 'wealth of psychological detail'. Her peculiar kind of impressiveness, in fact, is conditioned by her *not* being known inside out, and—we have to confess it—could *not* have been achieved by George Eliot: she knows too much about that kind of girl. For it is fair to say that if James had met Gwendolen Harleth (and, it must be added, if she had been an American) he would have seen Isabel Archer, he immensely admired George Eliot's inwardness and completeness of rendering, but when he met the girl in actual life and was prompted to the conception of *The Portrait of a Lady*, he saw her with the eyes of an American gentleman.

It is of course possible to imagine a beautiful, clever and vital girl, with 'that sense of superior claims which made a large part of her consciousness' (George Eliot's phrase for Gwendolen, but it applies equally to Isabel), whose egoism yet shouldn't be as much open to the criticism of an intelligent woman as Gwendolen's. But it is hard to believe that, in life, she could be as free from qualities inviting a critical response as the Isabel Archer seen by James. Asking of Gwendolen, why, though a mere girl, she should be everywhere a centre of deferential attention, George Eliot says (Chap. IV) 'The answer may seem to lie quite on the surface—in her beauty, a certain unusualness about her, a decision of will which made itself felt in her graceful movements and clear unhesitating tones, so that if she came into the room on a rainy day when everybody else was flaccid and the use of things in general was not apparent to them, there seemed to be a sudden reason for keeping up the forms of life'. James might very well have been glad to have found these phrases for his heroine. But George Eliot isn't satisfied with the answer: she not only goes on, as James would hardly have done, to talk about

the girl's 'inborn energy of egoistic desire', she is very specific and concrete in exhibiting the play of that energy—the ways in which it imposes her claims on the people around her. And it is not enough to reply that James doesn't need to be specific to this effect—even granting, as we may, that the two authors are dealing with different girls—it is so plain that George Eliot knows more about hers than he about his, and that this accounts for an important part of the ostensible difference.

And in so far as the ostensible difference does, as we have to grant it does, go back to an actual difference in the object of the novelist's interest, then we must recognize, I think, that George Eliot's choice—one determined by the nature of her interests and the quality of her interestedness—of a Gwendolen rather than an Isabel is that of someone who knows and sees more and has a completer grasp of the real, and that it is one that enables the novelist to explore more thoroughly and profoundly the distinctive field of human nature to be representative of which is the essential interest offered by both girls—though the one offers a fuller and richer development than the other. Difference of actual type chosen for presentment, difference of specificity and depth in presenting—it isn't possible, as a matter of fact, to distinguish with any decision and say which mainly we have to do with. Isabel, a beautiful and impressive American girl, is in the habit of receiving deferential masculine attention, she would certainly be very extraordinary if she were not in the habit of expecting something in the nature of homage. Here is George Eliot on Gwendolen (Chap. XL)

'In the ladies' dining-room it was evident that Gwendolen was not a general favourite with her own sex, there were no beginnings of intimacy between her and the other girls, and in conversation they rather noted what she said than spoke to her in free exchange. Perhaps it was that she was not much interested in them, and when left alone in their company had a sense of empty benches. Mrs. Vulcany once remarked that Miss Harleth was too fond of the gentlemen, but we know that she was not in the least fond of them—she was only fond of their homage—and women did not give her homage.'

James *tells* us nothing like this about Isabel, in fact he *shows* us her receiving homage from women as well. But we can't help remembering that James himself is a gentleman—and remembering also as relevant (without, of course, imputing silliness to James) George Eliot's description of Herr Klesmer being introduced, by Mrs. Arrowpoint, to Gwendolen (Chap. V) 'his alarming cleverness was made less formidable just then by a certain softening air of silliness which will sometimes befall even Genius in the desire of being agreeable to Beauty'.

George Eliot's genius appears in the specificity with which she exhibits the accompaniments in Gwendolen of the kind of conscious advantage she resembles Isabel in enjoying. There is

the conversation with Mrs Arrowpoint that comes just before Herr Klesmer has the opportunity to produce that 'softening air of silliness', a conversation that illustrates one of the disabilities of egoism 'self-confidence is apt to address itself to an imaginary dulness in others, as people who are well off speak in a cajoling tone to the poor, and those who are in the prime of life raise their voice and speak artificially to seniors, hastily conceiving them to be deaf and rather imbecile' We have hardly here a writer the movement of whose mind is 'too slow and cumbersome for comedy' and whose 'hold upon dialogue is slack' When she is at her best, as she is on so large a scale in *Gwendolen Harleth*, there is no writer of whom these criticisms are less true Nowhere is her genius more apparent than in the sensitive precision of her 'hold on dialogue', a hold which, with the variety of living tension she can create with it, is illustrated below in the scene between Gwendolen and her mother that follows on the arrival of Grandcourt's self-committing note, and in the decisive tête-à-tête with Grandcourt It is essentially in her speech that Gwendolen is made a concrete presence—Gwendolen, whose 'ideal it was to be daring in speech and reckless in braving danger, both moral and physical', of whom it is hard to say whether she is more fitly described as tending to act herself or her ideal of herself, 'whose lively venturesomeness of talk has the effect of wit' ('it was never her aspiration to express herself virtuously so much as cleverly—a point to be remembered in extenuation of her words, which were usually worse than she was') Here she is with her mother before the anticipated first meeting with Grandcourt

'Mrs Davilow felt her ears tingle when Gwendolen, suddenly throwing herself into the attitude of drawing her bow, said with a look of comic enjoyment—

"How I pity all the other girls at the Archery Meeting—all thinking of Mr Grandcourt! And they have not a shadow of a chance"

Mrs Davilow had not presence of mind to answer immediately, and Gwendolen turned quickly round towards her, saying, wickedly "Now you know they have not, mamma You and my uncle and aunt—you all intend him to fall in love with me"

Mrs Davilow, piqued into a little strategem, said, "Oh, my dear, that is not so certain Miss Arrowpoint has charms which you have not"

"I know, but they demand thought My arrow will pierce him before he has time for thought He will declare himself my slave—I shall send him round the world to bring me back the wedding-ring of a happy woman—in the meantime all the men who are between him and the title will die of different diseases—he will come back Lord Grandcourt—but without the ring—and fall at my feet I shall laugh at him—he will rise in resentment—I shall laugh more—he will call for his steed and

ride to Quetcham, where he will find Miss Arrowpoint just married to a needy musician, Mrs Arrowpoint tearing her cap off, and Mr Arrowpoint standing by Exit Lord Grandcourt, who returns to Diplow, and, like M Jabot, *change de linge*''

Was ever any young witch like this? You thought of hiding things from her—sat upon the secret and looked innocent, and all the while she knew by the corner of your eye that it was exactly five pounds ten you were sitting on! As well turn the key to keep out the damp! It was probable that by dint of divination she already knew more than any one else did of Mr Grandcourt That idea in Mrs Davilow's mind prompted the sort of question which often comes without any other apparent reason than the faculty of speech and the not knowing what to do with it

"Why, what kind of man do you imagine him to be, Gwendolen?"

"Let me see!" said the witch, putting her forefinger to her lips with a little frown, and then stretching out the finger with decision "Short—just above my shoulder—trying to make himself tall by turning up his mustache and keeping his beard long—a glass in his right eye to give him an air of distinction—a strong opinion about his waistcoat, but uncertain and trimming about the weather, on which he will try to draw me out He will stare at me all the while, and the glass in his eye will cause him to make horrible faces, especially when he smiles in a flattering way I shall cast down my eyes in consequence, and he will perceive that I am not indifferent to his attentions I shall dream at night that I am looking at the extraordinary face of a magnified insect—and the next morning he will make me the offer of his hand, the sequel as before"

With such sureness of touch does George Eliot render the kind of lively, 'venturesome' lightness it is something more than a second nature in Gwendolen to affect that one's mind reverts again and again to the peculiar reputation enjoyed by Congreve That kind of praise applies more reasonably to the perfection achieved by George Eliot, to the unfailing rightness with which she gets, in all its turns and moods, her protagonist's airy self-dramatizing sophistication—in which there is a great deal more point than in the alleged 'perfection of style' Congreve gives to Millamant, since Gwendolen's talk is really dramatic, correspondingly significant, and duly 'placed' We are not offered wit and phrasing for our admiration and the delight of our palates

It is in the scene between Gwendolen and Grandcourt that George Eliot's mastery of dialogue is most strikingly exhibited We have it in the brush that follows, in Chap XI, on their being introduced to each other It is shown in the rendering of high dramatic tension in Chap XIII, where Gwendolen takes evasive action in the face of Grandcourt's clear intent to propose I will save quotation for the marvellously economical passage (reference

to it will be in place later) in which she finds that she has placed herself in a position in which she can't not accept, and acceptance seems to determine itself without an act of will. There is a good example of light exchange between them in the following Chapter (XXVIII)

At the moment, what has to be noted is that, though James's Pulcheria of the 'Conversation' says 'they are very much alike' ('it proves how common a type the worldly, *pincé*, selfish young woman seemed to her'), Gwendolen is decidedly not another Rosamond Vincy, her talk is enough to establish that as Theodora says, she is intelligent. It is with Mrs Transome that she belongs, being qualified in the same kind of way as Mrs Transome had been in youth to enact the rôle of daringly brilliant beauty 'she had never dissociated happiness from personal pre-eminence and *éclat*'². She is intelligent—in Mrs Transome's way

'In the schoolroom her quick mind had taken readily that strong starch of unexplained rules and disconnected facts which saves ignorance from any painful sense of limpness, and what remained of all things knowable, she was conscious of being sufficiently acquainted with through novels, plays and poems. About her French and music, the two justifying accomplishments of a young lady, she felt no ground for uneasiness, and when to all these qualifications, negative and positive, we add the spontaneous sense of capability some happy persons are born with, so that any subject they turn attention to impresses them with their own power of forming a correct judgment on it, who can wonder if Gwendolen felt ready to manage her own destiny' (Chap. IV)

It is only when compared with George Eliot herself that she is (like Mrs Transome) to be classed with Rosamond Vincy: none of these three *personae* is at all like Dorothea, or represents any possibility of the Dorothea relation to the novelist. As James's Theodora says, she is intelligent, 'and therefore tragedy *can* have a hold on her'. She is a young Mrs Transome, in whom disaster forces a development of conscience, for, in George Eliot's phrase, 'she has a root of conscience in her'. It is there from the beginning in her dread of 'the unpleasant sense of compunction towards her mother, which was the nearest approach to self-condemnation and self-distrust she had known'. We are told also 'Hers was one of the natures in which exultation invariably carries an infusion of dread ready to curdle and declare itself'. This, which is dramatically exemplified in the episode of the suddenly revealed picture of the dead face during the charades (in Chap. VI) may seem a merely arbitrary *donnée*. Actually, in a youthful egoist, dreading compunction and intelligent enough to dread also the unknown within—the anarchic movement of impulse with its irrevocable con-

²'Church was not markedly distinguished in her mind from the other forms of self-presentation' (Chap. XLVII)

sequences, it can be seen to be part of the essential case, especially when the trait is associated with an uneasy sense of the precarious status of egoistic 'exultation' and egoistic claims—a sense natural to an imaginative young egoist in the painful impressionableness of immaturity 'Solitude in any wide sense', we are told, 'impressed her with an undefined feeling of immeasurable existence aloof from her, in the midst of which she was helplessly incapable of asserting herself' It all seems to me imagined with truth and subtlety, and admirably analysed So that when we are told, 'Whatever was accepted as consistent with being a lady she had no scruple about, but from the dim region of what was called disgraceful, wrong, guilty, she shrank with mingled pride and terror', then a whole concrete case is focussed in the summary The potentiality in Gwendolen of a seismic remorse is concretely established for us

Here, of course, we have a difference between her and Isabel Archer remorse—it doesn't belong to James's conception of his young woman that she shall have any need for that She is merely to make a wrong choice, the wrongness of which is a matter of an error in judgment involving no guilt on her part, though it involves tragic consequences for her As Mr Yvor Winters sees it, in his essay on him in *Maule's Curse*, James is concerned, characteristically, to present the choice as free—to present it as pure choice 'The moral issue, then, since it is primarily an American affair, is freed in most of the Jamesian novels, and in all of the greatest, from the compulsion of a code of manners' This certainly has a bearing on the difference between Gwendolen and Isabel, between the English young lady in her proper setting of mid-Victorian English 'best society', one who in her 'venture-someness' 'cannot conceive herself as anything else than a lady',³ and the 'free' American girl, who moves on the Old World stage as an indefinitely licensed and privileged interloper But there is a more obviously important difference 'The moral issue is also freed from economic necessity Isabel Archer is benevolently provided with funds after her story opens, with the express purpose that her action shall thereafter be unhampered'

The contrast offered by George Eliot's preoccupation is extreme All her creative power works to the evoking of a system of pressures so intolerable to Gwendolen, and so enclosing, that her final acceptance of Grandcourt seems to issue, not from her will, but from them, if she acts, it is certainly not in freedom, and she hasn't even the sense of exercising choice Economic necessity plays a determining part In the earlier phase of the history she has, as much as Isabel Archer, in respect of Lord Warburton and

³'She rejoiced to feel herself exceptional, but her horizon was that of a genteel romance where the heroine's soul poured out in her journal is full of vague power, originality and general rebellion, while her life moves strictly in the sphere of fashion, and if she wanders into swamp, the pathos lies partly, so to speak, in her having on satin shoes' (Chap VI)

Gilbert Osmond, free choice in front of her—does she, or does she not, want to marry Grandcourt? But after the meeting with Mrs Glasher and Grandcourt's children she recoils in disgust and horror from the idea of marriage with him, she recoils from the wrong to others, and from the insult (she feels) offered herself. Then comes the financial disaster, engulfing her family. The effect on Gwendolen, with her indolent egoism and her spoilt child's ignorance of practical realities, and the consequences for her—these are evoked with vivid particularity. There is, pressed on her by the kind and efficient Rector, her uncle, as a duty that is at the same time a gift of fortune she can't fail to accept with grateful gladness, the situation of governess with Mrs Mompert, the Bishop's wife—who, as a woman of 'strict principle' such as precludes her from 'having a French person in the house', will want to inspect even the Rector's nominee before appointing her—the sheer impossibility of such a 'situation' for Gwendolen is something we are made to feel from the inside. The complementary kind of impossibility, the impossibility of her own plan of exploiting with *éclat* her talents and advantages and becoming a great actress or singer, is brought home to her with crushing and humiliating finality by Herr Klesmer (Chap XXIII). It is immediately after this interview, which leaves her with no hope of an alternative to Mrs Mompert and the 'episcopal penitentiary', that Grandcourt's note arrives, asking if he may call. No better illustration of George Eliot's peculiar genius as a novelist—a kind of genius so different from that she is commonly credited with—can be found for quoting than the presentment of Gwendolen's reactions. Here we have the most subtle and convincing analysis rendered, with extraordinary vividness and economy, in the concrete, the shifting tensions in Gwendolen are registered in her speech and outward movements, and the whole is (in an essentially novelistic way) so dramatic that we don't distinguish the elements of description and commentary as such.

'Gwendolen let it fall on the floor, and turned away

"It must be answered, darling", said Mrs Davilow, timidly
 "The man waits"

Gwendolen sank on the settee, clasped her hands, and looked straight before her, not at her mother. She had the expression of one who had been startled by a sound and was listening to know what would come of it. The sudden change of the situation was bewildering. A few minutes before she was looking along an inescapable path of repulsive monotony, with hopeless inward rebellion against the imperious lot which left her no choice—and lo, now, a moment of choice was come. Yet—was it triumph she felt most or terror? Impossible for Gwendolen not to feel some triumph in a tribute to her power at a time when she was first tasting the bitterness of insignificance—again she seemed to be getting a sort of empire over her own life. But how to use it? Here came the terror. Quick, quick, like pictures in a book beaten open with a sense of hurry, came back vividly, yet in

fragments, all that she had gone through in relation to Grandcourt—the allurements, the vacillations, the resolve to accede, the final repulsion, the incisive face of that dark-eyed lady with the lovely boy, her own pledge (was it a pledge not to marry him?)—the new disbelief in the worth of men and things for which that scene of disclosure had become a symbol. That unalterable experience made a vision at which in the first agitated moment, before tempering reflections could suggest themselves, her native terror shrank.

Where was the good of choice coming again? What did she wish? Anything different? No! and yet in the dark seed-growths of consciousness a new wish was forming itself—"I wish I had never known it!" Something, anything she wished for that would have saved her from the dread to let Grandcourt come.

It was no long while—yet it seemed long to Mrs Davilow, before she thought it well to say, gently—

"It will be necessary for you to write, dear. Or shall I write an answer for you—which you will dictate?"

"No, mamma", said Gwendolen, drawing a deep breath "But please lay me out the pen and paper."

That was gaining time. Was she to decline Grandcourt's visit—close the shutters—not even look out on what would happen?—though with the assurance that she should remain just where she was? The young activity within her made a warm current through her terror and stirred towards something that would be an event—towards an opportunity in which she could look and speak with the former effectiveness. The interest of the morrow was no longer at a deadlock.

"There is really no reason on earth why you should be so alarmed at the man's waiting for a few minutes, mamma", said Gwendolen, remonstrantly, as Mrs Davilow, having prepared the writing materials, looked towards her expectantly. "Servants expect nothing else than to wait. It is not to be supposed that I must write on the instant."

"No, dear", said Mrs Davilow, in the tone of one corrected, turning to sit down and take up a bit of work that lay at hand, "he can wait another quarter of an hour, if you like."

It was a very simple speech and action on her part, but it was what might have been subtly calculated. Gwendolen felt a contradictory desire to be hastened. hurry would save her from deliberate choice.

"I did not mean him to wait long enough for that needle-work to be finished", she said, lifting her hands to stroke the backward curves of her hair, while she rose from her seat and stood still.

"But if you don't feel able to decide?" said Mrs Davilow, sympathisingly.

"I *must* decide", said Gwendolen, walking to the writing-table and seating herself. All the while there was a busy undercurrent in her, like the thought of a man who keeps up

a dialogue while he is considering how he can slip away. Why should she not let him come? It bound her to nothing. He had been to Leubronn after her, of course he meant a direct unmistakable renewal of the suit which before had been only implied. What then? She could reject him. Why was she to deny herself the freedom of doing this—which she would like to do?

"If Mr Grandcourt has only just returned from Leubronn", said Mrs Davilow, observing that Gwendolen leaned back in her chair after taking the pen in her hand—"I wonder whether he has heard of our misfortunes"

"That could make no difference to a man in his position", said Gwendolen, rather contemptuously.

"It would, to some men", said Mrs Davilow. "They would not like to take a wife from a family in a state of beggary almost, as we are. Here we are at Offendene, with a great shell over us as usual. But just imagine his finding us at Sawyer's Cottage. Most men are afraid of being bored or taxed by a wife's family. If Mr Grandcourt did know, I think it a strong proof of his attachment to you."

Mrs Davilow spoke with unusual emphasis. It was the first time she had ventured to say anything about Grandcourt which would necessarily seem intended as an argument in favour of him, her habitual impression being that such arguments would certainly be useless and might be worse. The effect of her words now was stronger than she could imagine. They raised a new set of possibilities in Gwendolen's mind—a vision of what Grandcourt might do for her mother if she, Gwendolen, did—what she was not going to do. She was so moved by a new rush of ideas, that like one conscious of being urgently called away, she felt that the immediate task must be hastened. The letter must be written, else it might be endlessly deferred. After all, she acted in a hurry as she had wished to do. To act in a hurry was to have a reason for keeping away from an absolute decision, and to leave open as many issues as possible.

She wrote. "Miss Harleth presents her compliments to Mr Grandcourt. She will be at home after two o'clock to-morrow."

Reading this, it is hard to remember that George Eliot was contemporary with Trollope. What later novelist has rendered the inner movement of impulse, the play of motive that issues in speech and act, and underlies formed thought and conscious will, with more penetrating subtlety than she? It is partly done *through* speech and action. But there is also, co-operating with these, a kind of psychological notation that is well represented in the passage quoted above, and is exemplified in 'Quick, quick, like pictures in a book beaten open with a sense of hurry', and 'yet in the dark seed-growths of consciousness a new wish was forming itself', and 'The young activity within her made a warm current through her terror', and 'All the while there was a busy

under-current in her, like the thought of a man who keeps up a dialogue while he is considering how he can slip away'—and so much else. This notation is one of the distinctive characteristics of her mature style,⁴ doing its work always with an inevitable rightness—and *Daniel Deronda* (with *Middlemarch*) was written in the earlier 'seventies. But remarkable as it is, and impressive as would be the assemblage of instances that could be quickly brought together, it is better not to stress it without adding that, as she uses it, it is inseparable from her rendering of 'psychology' in speech and action. It doesn't seem to me that her genius as exhibited in these ways has been anything like duly recognized.

The passage last quoted is not the work of a 'slow and cumbersome mind'. As for the 'hold on dialogue', here is the proposal scene (again quotation must be at length)

'In eluding a direct appeal Gwendolen recovered some of her self-possession. She spoke with dignity and looked straight at Grandcourt, whose long, narrow, impenetrable eyes met hers, and mysteriously arrested them. mysteriously, for the subtly-varied drama between man and woman is often such as can hardly be rendered in words put together like dominoes, according to obvious fixed marks. The word of all work, Love, will no more express the myriad modes of mutual attraction, than the word Thought can inform you what is passing through your neighbour's mind. It would be hard to tell on which side—Gwendolen's or Grandcourt's—the influence was more mixed. At that moment his strongest wish was to be completely master of this creature—this piquant combination of maidenliness and mischief—that she knew things which had made her start away from him, spurred him to triumph. And she—ah! piteous equality in the need to dominate!—she was overcome like the thirsty one who is drawn towards the seeming water in the desert, overcome by the suffused sense that here in this man's homage to her lay the rescue from helpless subjection to an oppressive lot.

All the while they were looking at each other, and Grandcourt said, slowly and languidly, as if it were of no importance, other things having been settled—

"You will tell me now, I hope, that Mrs Davilow's loss of fortune will not trouble you further. You will trust me to prevent it from weighing upon her. You will give me the claim to provide against that."

⁴The record of Gwendolen's later days of desperation is rich in quotable instances, *e.g.* 'The thought of his dying would not subsist: it turned as with a dream-change into the terror that she should die with his throttling fingers on her neck avenging that thought. Fantasies moved within her like ghosts, making no break in her more acknowledged consciousness and finding no obstruction in it. dark rays doing their work invisibly in the broad light' (Chap. XLVIII)

The little pauses and refined drawlings with which this speech was uttered, gave time for Gwendolen to go through the dream of a life. As the words penetrated her, they had the effect of a draught of wine, which suddenly makes all things easier, desirable things not so wrong, and people in general less disagreeable. She had a momentary phantasmal love for this man who chose his words so well, and who was a mere incarnation of delicate homage. Repugnance, dread, scruples—these were dim as remembered pains, while she was already tasting relief under the immediate pain of hopelessness. She imagined herself already springing to her mother, and being playful again. Yet when Grandcourt had ceased to speak, there was an instant in which she was conscious of being at the turning of the ways.

"You are very generous", she said, not moving her eyes, and speaking with a gentle intonation.

"You accept what will make such things a matter of course?" said Grandcourt, without any new eagerness. "You consent to become my wife?"

This time Gwendolen remained quite pale. Something made her rise from her seat in spite of herself and walk to a little distance. Then she turned and with her hands folded before her stood in silence.

Grandcourt immediately rose too, resting his hat on the chair, but still keeping hold of it. The evident hesitation of this destitute girl to take his splendid offer stung him into a keenness of interest such as he had not known for years. None the less because he attributed her hesitation entirely to her knowledge about Mrs. Glasher. In that attitude of preparation, he said—

"Do you command me to go?" No familiar spirit could have suggested to him more effective words.

"No", said Gwendolen. She could not let him go that negative was a clutch. She seemed to herself to be, after all, only drifted towards the tremendous decision—but drifting depends on something besides the currents, when the sails have been set beforehand.

"You accept my devotion?" said Grandcourt, holding his hat by his side and looking straight into her eyes, without other movement. Their eyes meeting in that way seemed to allow any length of pause, but wait as long as she would, how could she contradict herself? What had she detained him for? He had shut out any explanation.

"Yes", came as gravely from Gwendolen's lips as if she had been answering to her name in a court of justice. He received it gravely, and they still looked at each other in the same attitude. Was there ever before such a way of accepting the bliss-giving "Yes"? Grandcourt liked better to be at that distance from her, and to feel under a ceremony imposed by an indefinable prohibition that breathed from Gwendolen's bearing.

But he did at length lay down his hat and advance to take her hand, just pressing his lips upon it and letting it go again.

She thought his behaviour perfect, and gained a sense of freedom which made her almost ready to be mischievous. Her "Yes" entailed so little at this moment, that there was nothing to screen the reversal of her gloomy prospects: her vision was filled by her own release from the Momperts, and her mother's release from Sawyer's Cottage. With a happy curl of the lips, she said—

"Will you not see mamma? I will fetch her"

"Let us wait a little", said Grandcourt, in his favourite attitude, naving his left forefinger and thumb in his waistcoat pocket, and with his right caressing his whisker, while he stood near Gwendolen and looked at her—not unlike a gentleman who has a felicitous introduction at an evening-party.

"Have you anything else to say to me?" said Gwendolen, playfully.

"Yes—I know having things said to you is a great bore", said Grandcourt, rather sympathetically.

"Not when they are things I like to hear"

"Will it bother you to ask how soon we can be married?"

"I think it will, to-day", said Gwendolen, putting up her chin saucily.

"Not to-day, then, but to-morrow. Think of it before I come to-morrow. In a fortnight—or three weeks—as soon as possible"

"Ah, you think you will be tired of my company", said Gwendolen. "I notice when people are married the husband is not so much with his wife as when they are engaged. But perhaps I shall like that better too"

She laughed charmingly.

"You shall have whatever you like", said Grandcourt.

"And nothing that I don't like?—please say that, because I think I dislike what I don't like more than I like what I like", said Gwendolen, finding herself in the woman's paradise where all her nonsense is adorable.

It will be noted how beautifully the status of Gwendolen's spontaneously acted self is defined by her relieved and easy assumption of it once the phase of tense negativity has issued in 'yes'. And it was clearly not this self that pronounced the 'Yes', nor does it come from a profound integrated self. George Eliot's way of putting it is significant: "'Yes' came as gravely from Gwendolen's lips as if she had been answering to her name in a court of justice". This is a response that issues out of something like an abeyance of will, it is determined for her. No acquiescence could look less like an expression of free choice. Yet we don't feel that Gwendolen is therefore not to be judged as a moral agent. The 'Yes' is a true expression of her moral economy, that the play of tensions should have as its upshot this response has been established by habits of valuation and by essential choices lived. 'She seemed to herself to be, after all, only drifted towards the tremendous decision—but drifting depends on something besides

the currents, when the sails have been set beforehand' Even before what she saw as a moral objection arose to confront her, she had had no sense of herself as able to settle her relations with Grandcourt by a clear and free act of choice

'Even in Gwendolen's mind that result was one of two likelihoods that presented themselves alternately, one of two decisions towards which she was being precipitated, as if they were two sides of a boundary line, and she did not know on which she should fall This subjection to a possible self, a self not to be absolutely predicted about, caused her some astonishment and terror her favourite key of life—doing as she liked—seemed to fail her, and she could not foresee what at a given moment she might like to do' (Chap XIII)

But we aren't inclined to think of her as being then any the less a subject for moral evaluation We note rather, as entering into the account, that she gets a thrill out of the surrender to tense uncertainty, and that it is not for nothing that at her first introduction to us, in the opening, she figures as the gambler, lost in the intoxication of hazard The situation, in respect of Gwendolen's status as a moral agent, isn't essentially altered by the reinforcement, in conflicting senses, of the pulls and pressures bearing on the act of choice the supervention of a powerful force, represented by Mrs Glasher, carrying Gwendolen in recoil from Grandcourt, which is countered by a new pressure towards acceptance—the economic one (translatable by Gwendolen into terms of duty towards her mother)⁵

We note, with regard to Gwendolen's attitude towards what she sees as the strong moral ground for refusing Grandcourt, that 'in the dark seed-growths of consciousness a new wish was forming itself—"I wish I had never known it"' There is much concrete psychological notation to this effect, deriving from the insight of a great novelist, that it has a moral significance, a relation to that ostensibly mechanical and unwilling "Yes", is plain But it is possible to overstress Gwendolen's guilt in the matter of Mrs Glasher, a guilt that is so very conscious George Eliot's appreci-

⁵The cheque was for five hundred pounds, and Gwendolen turned it towards her mother, with the letter

"How very kind and delicate!", said Mrs Davilow, with much feeling "But I really should like better not to be dependent on a son-in-law I and the girls could get along very well"

"Mamma, if you say that again, I will not marry him", said Gwendolen, angrily

"My dear child, I trust you are not going to marry only for my sake", said Mrs Davilow deprecatingly

Gwendolen tossed her head on the pillow away from her mother, and let the ring lie She was irritated at this attempt to take away a motive' (Chap XXVIII)

ation of the moral issues doesn't coincide with that of her protagonist—or of the conventional Victorian moralist. For George Eliot the essential significance of Gwendolen's case lies in the egoism expressed here (the passage follows immediately on that last quoted, in which she 'could not foresee what at a given moment she might like to do')

'The prospect of marrying Grandcourt really seemed more attractive to her than she had believed beforehand that any marriage could be the dignities, the luxuries, the power of doing a great deal of what she liked to, which had now come close to her, and within her power to secure or to lose, took hold of her nature as if it had been the strong odour of what she had only imagined and longed for before. And Grandcourt himself? He seemed as little of a flaw in his fortunes as a lover and husband could possibly be. Gwendolen wished to mount the chariot and drive the plunging horses herself, with a spouse by her side who would fold his arms and give his countenance without looking ridiculous'

It is again a case of Hubris with its appropriate Nemesis. What first piqued her into turning on 'this Mr. Grandcourt' a quality of intention no other man had exacted from her was that 'he seemed to feel his own importance more than he did hers—a sort of unreasonableness few of us can tolerate'. She had a similar attraction for him. When, too late, she knows to the full the mistakenness of her assumptions and finds herself beaten at her own game, the great hold Grandcourt has over her lies in her moral similarity to him. For she too, with her melancholy distaste for things, preferred that her distaste should include admirers'. And the best she can do is 'to bear this last great gambling loss with perfect self-possession'. 'True, she still saw that she "would manage differently from mamma", but her management now only meant that she would carry her troubles with an air of perfect self-possession, and let none suspect them'. As for what she takes to be her guilt, pride in her over-rides remorse: what she most cares about is that Grandcourt shall not know that she knew of Mrs. Glasher before accepting him (though ironically he has, all along, known, and his knowledge had added to Gwendolen's attractiveness for him). The consequent torment reminds us closely of Mrs. Transome's Nemesis: 'now that she was a wife, the sense that Grandcourt was gone to Gadsmer [his home for Mrs. Glasher and his children] was like red heat near a burn. She had brought on herself this indignity in her own eyes—this humiliation of being doomed to a terrified silence lest her husband should discover with what sort of consciousness she had married him, and as she had said to Deronda, she "must go on"'. And 'in spite of remorse, it still seemed the worse result of her marriage that she should in any way make a spectacle of herself, and her humiliation was lightened by her thinking that only Mrs. Glasher was aware of the fact that caused it'

So much pride and courage and sensitiveness and intelligence fixed in a destructive deadlock through false valuation and self-ignorance—this is what makes Gwendolen a tragic figure. And as George Eliot establishes for our contemplation the complexities of inner constitution and outer conditions that make Gwendolen look so different from Isabel Archer, she is exhibiting what we recognize from our own most intimate experience, to be as much the behaviour of a responsible moral agent, and so as much amenable to moral judgment, as any human behaviour can be. Not of course, that our attitude is that of the judge towards the prisoner in the dock, but neither is it that of *tout comprendre, c'est tout pardonner*. It is, or should be (with George Eliot's help), George Eliot's own, which is that of a great novelist, concerned with human and moral valuation in a way proper to her art—it is a way that doesn't let us forget that what is being lit up for us lies within.

And turning once more, for a moment, to Isabel Archer, we may ask whether, in this matter of choice, she is essentially as different from Gwendolen as she is made to appear. Isn't her appearance of being so much more free to choose with her 'ethical sensibility' largely illusion? She herself must look back on her treasured freedom of choice with some irony when, after her marriage, she has learnt of the relations between her husband and Madame Merle, and of the part played by Madame Merle in her 'choosing' to marry Osmond. But for us it is the wider significance of the revelation that needs dwelling on. It is not surprising that so young a girl, and one so new to the social climate, should have been unable to value at their true worth either Madame Merle or Gilbert Osmond, and, we go on to reflect, how could, in any case, anyone so little experienced in life, knowing—as is inevitable at the age—so little about herself, and (inevitably) so vague about what in concrete terms the 'fineness' she means to achieve in life might amount to—how could such a girl exercise a choice that should be essentially more than Gwendolen's a free expression of ethical sensibility? Doesn't it largely come down to the greater specificity we have noted as characterizing George Eliot in comparison with James? And isn't there, in fact, something evasive about James's inexplicitness, something equivocal about his indirectness and the subtlety of implication with which he pursues his aim of excluding all but the 'essential'?

What, we ask, thinking by contrast of the fulness and immediacy with which we have Gwendolen, is the *substance* of Isabel's interest for us? In spite of such things as the fine passage in Chapter XLII of *The Portrait of a Lady* that evokes her finding 'the infinite vista of a multiplied life to be a dark alley with a dead wall at the end', we see that James's marvellous art is devoted to contenting us with very little in the way of inward realization of Isabel, and to keeping us interested instead, in a kind of psychological detective work—keeping us intently wondering from the outside, and constructing, on a strict economy of evidence, what

is going on inside. And, if we consider, we find that the constructions to which we are led are of such a kind as not to challenge, or to bear with comfort, any very searching test in terms of concrete reality. The difference between James and George Eliot is largely a matter of what he leaves out. The leaving out, of course, is a very positive art that offers the compensation. But it is not the less fair to say that what James does with *Daniel Deronda* (or rather with *Gwendolen Harleth*) throws a strong light on the characteristic working, the significance, of that peculiar American moral sense which Mr. Winters discusses in relation to the New England background—a light in which its limiting tendency appears as drastic indeed. *The Portrait of a Lady* belongs to the sappiest phase of James's art, when the hypertrophy of technique hadn't yet set in, but, in the light of the patent relation to *Gwendolen Harleth*, we can see already a certain disproportion between an intensity of art that has at the same time an effect of moral intensity and the actual substance of human interest provided. That James should have done *this* with what George Eliot provided him with, and done it with such strenuously refined art!—that registers our reaction.

Actually, we can see that the trouble is that he derives so much more from George Eliot than he suspects: he largely mistakes the nature of his inspiration, which is not so much from life as he supposes. He has been profoundly impressed by the irony of Gwendolen's married situation, and is really moved by the desire to produce a similar irony. But he fails to produce the fable that gives inevitability and moral significance. He can remain unaware of his failure because he is so largely occupied (a point that can be illustrated in detail) in transposing George Eliot, whose power is due to the profound psychological truth of her conception, and the consistency with which she develops it.

Isabel Archer, for all James's concern (if Mr. Winters is right) to isolate in her the problem of ethical choice, has neither a more intense nor a richer moral significance than Gwendolen Harleth, but very much the reverse. If this way of stating James's interest in her seems obtuse, and we are to appreciate a fully ironical intention in his presentment of the irony of her case, and are to say (as surely we are) that he intends an ironical 'placing' of her illusion, the adverse criticism of James still holds. For we can still see Mr. Winter's excuse for stating things in *his* way: beyond any question we are invited to share a valuation of Isabel that is incompatible with a really critical irony. We can't even say that James makes an implicit critical comment on the background of American idealism that fostered her romantic confidence in life and in her ability to choose: he admires her so much, and demands for her such admiration and homage, that he can't be credited with 'placing' the conditions that, as an admirable American girl, she represents. James's lack of specificity favours an evasiveness, and the evasiveness, if at all closely questioned, yields inconsistency of a kind that largely empties the theme of *The Portrait of a*

Lady of moral substance And in James's later work we again and again find ourselves asking, without finding a satisfactory answer What moral substance is there, what is there that can be defined in terms of human interest, to justify this sustained and strenuous suggestion that important issues are involved, important choices are to be made? His kind of preoccupation with eliminating the inessential clearly tends to become the pursuit of an essential that is illusory

If any doubt should linger as to whether one is justified in talking about what James does with *Gwendolen Harleth*, it should be settled finally by a consideration of Osmond in relation to Grandcourt Osmond so plainly is Grandcourt, hardly disguised, that the general derivative relation of James's novel to George Eliot's becomes quite unquestionable It is true that Grandcourt is no aesthetic connoisseur, but Osmond's interest in articles of *virtù* amounts to nothing more than a notation for a kind of cherished fastidiousness of conscious, but empty, superiority that is precisely Grandcourt's 'From the first she had noticed that he had nothing of the fool in his composition but that by some subtle means he communicated to her the impression that all the folly lay with other people, who did what he did not care to do' That might very well be an account of the effect of Osmond on Isabel, but it comes from George Eliot Grandcourt, as an English aristocrat whose status licenses any amount of languid disdain doesn't need a symbolic dilettantism

'He himself knew what personal repulsion was—nobody better his mind was much furnished with a sense of what brutes his fellow-creatures were, both masculine and feminine, what odious familiarities they had, what smirks, what modes of flourishing their handkerchiefs, what costumes, what lavender-water, what bulging eyes, and what foolish notions of making themselves agreeable by remarks which were not wanted In this critical view of mankind there was affinity between him and Gwendolen before their marriage, and we know that she had been attractingly wrought upon by the refined negations he presented to her' (Chap LIV)

This equally describes Osmond, of whom it might equally well be said that 'he is a man whose grace of bearing has long been moulded on an experience of boredom', and that 'he has worn out all his healthy interest in things' All either cares about is to be assured that he feels superior, and the contemptible paradox of a superiority that is nothing unless assured of itself by these whose judgment it affects to despise is neatly 'placed' by George Eliot here

'It is true that Grandcourt went about with the sense that he did not care a languid curse for any one's admiration, but this state of not-caring, just as much as desire, required its related object—namely, a world of admiring or envying spectators for if you are fond of looking stonily at smiling persons, the persons

must be there and they must smile—a rudimentary truth which is surely forgotten by those who complain of mankind as generally contemptible, since any other aspect of the race must disappoint the voracity of their contempt'

In Grandcourt, of course, we have as elsewhere her strength, her advantage, of specificity. Our sense of the numbing spell in which his languidly remorseless domination holds Gwendolen doesn't depend upon suggestive inexplicitnesses, sinister overtones and glances from a distance. 'Grandcourt had become a blank uncertainty to her in everything but this, that he would do just what he willed' we don't feel him as less sinister and formidable than Osmond because we see him deliberately working to procure this effect (of which we understand perfectly the conditions) in a number of dramatic scenes that have all George Eliot's explicitness and fulness of actuality. Such scenes are that in which he lets her know that he understands perfectly why she has made the surreptitious call on Miss Lapidoth from which he catches her returning, that in which he tells her that she is to learn about his will from the hated Lush, and that, very short, but with an extraordinary power to disturb, in which he surprises her with Deronda—the scene that ends, with reference to the announced yachting cruise which she sees as blessedly releasing her to her mother's company 'No, you will go with me' (All these are in Chap. XLVIII)

In these scenes the sharpness of significant particularity with which the outward action is registered is very striking

'She was frightened at her own agitation, and began to unbutton her gloves that she might button them again, and bite her lips over the pretended difficulty'

The whole is *seen*, and the postures and movements are given with vivid precision. James's Constantius, contrasting George Eliot with Turgènev—he the poet, she the 'philosopher'—says 'One cares for the aspect of things and the other cares for the reason of things'. Nowhere is this characterization more patently wide of the mark than in those places where her supreme *intelligence* is most apparent. It is precisely because she cares for the 'reason' of things that she can render the aspect so vividly, her intelligence informs her perception and her visual imagination. The vividness of the rendering is significance.

As fine a sustained example of this power of hers is to be found in Chap. XXX, where Grandcourt visits Gadsdere in order to tell Mrs. Glasher of the coming marriage and to get from her the diamonds for Gwendolen. Not only is Mrs. Glasher afraid of him, he is afraid of her, for 'however he might assert his independence of Mrs. Glasher's past, he had made a past for himself which was a stronger yoke than any he could impose. He must ask for the diamonds which he had promised Gwendolen'. The inner drama in either as they act upon one another is so vividly present to us in outer movement that we seem to be watching a play, till 'Amid such caressing signs of mutual fear they parted'

Mrs Glasher is one of the admirably done subordinate characters in the book, which, when we have cut away the bad half, is not left thinly populated. Mrs Davilow, the Gascoigne family, Gwendolen's *bête-noire* Mr Lush ('with no active compassion or good-will, he had just as little active malevolence, being chiefly occupied in liking his particular pleasure'), Mrs Arrowpoint, Miss Arrowpoint (near kin to Mary Garth)—these are all *there* with a perfect rightness of presence, and with a quality of life that makes them George Eliot characters and no one else's.

And then there is Herr Klesmer, who, though a minor actor, has, for us, a major significance. Pointing to him, we can say here we have something that gives George Eliot an advantage, not only over Jane Austen (against whom we feel no challenge to press the point), but also over the James of *The Portrait of a Lady*. The point is so important that a generous measure of illustration seems in place. Here, then, is Herr Klesmer's incongruous presence at the Archery Meeting.

'We English are a miscellaneous people, and any chance fifty of us will present many varieties of animal architecture or facial ornament, but it must be admitted that our prevailing expression is not that of a lively, impassioned race, preoccupied with the ideal and carrying the real as a mere make-weight. The strong point of the English gentleman pure is the easy style of his figure and clothing, he objects to marked ins and outs in his costume, and he also objects to looking inspired.

Fancy an assemblage where the men had all that ordinary stamp of the well-bred Englishman, watching the entrance of Herr Klesmer—his mane of hair floating backward in massive inconsistency with the chimney-pot hat, which had the look of having been put on for a joke above his pronounced but well-modelled features and powerful clean-shaven mouth and chin, his tall thin figure clad in a way which, not being strictly English, was all the worse for its apparent emphasis of intention. Draped in a loose garment with a Florentine *beretta* on his head, he would have been fit to stand by the side of Leonardo da Vinci, but how when he presented himself in trousers, which were not what English feeling demanded about the knees?—and when the fire that showed itself in his glances and the movements of his head, as he looked round him with curiosity, was turned into comedy by a hat which ruled that mankind should have well-cropped hair and a staid demeanour, such, for example, as Mr Arrowpoint's, whose nullity of face and perfect tailoring might pass everywhere without ridicule? One sees why it is often better for greatness to be dead, and to have got rid of the outward man.

Many present knew Klesmer, or knew of him, but they had only seen him on candle-light occasions when he appeared simply as a musician, and he had not yet that supreme, world-wide celebrity which makes an artist great to the most ordinary people.

by their knowledge of his great expensiveness. It was literally a new light for them to see him in—presented unexpectedly on this July afternoon in an exclusive society—some were inclined to laugh, others felt a little disgust at the want of judgment shown by the Arrowpoints in this use of the introductory card.

“What extreme guys those artistic fellows usually are!” said young Clintock to Gwendolen.

The foreigner at English social and sporting functions, intrinsically ludicrous because of his ignorance of what's done—or rather, what isn't done, what isn't said, and what isn't worn, has always been a familiar figure in *Punch*. George Eliot doesn't miss the comic element in Klesmer's appearance, but she uses him to 'place' the Philistinism of English society, and the complacent unintelligence of its devotion to Good Form. James, in *The Portrait of a Lady*, can exhibit no such critical attitude towards the country house and its civilization.

George Eliot's use of Herr Klesmer is the more effective because her attitude is so complete and balanced—she sees what is genuinely laughable in the Teutonic Intellectual and licensed and conscious Artist—witness the conversation between them at the dance in Chap. XI.

But perhaps in the light of our present interest, the richest episode in which he figures is that with Mr. Bult (perfect name—how good George Eliot's names are).

Meanwhile enters the expectant peer, Mr. Bult, an esteemed party man who, rather neutral in private life, had strong opinions concerning the districts of the Niger, was much at home also in the Brazils, spoke with decision of affairs in the South Seas, was studious of his parliamentary and itinerant speeches, and had the general solidity and suffusive pinkness of a healthy Briton on the central table-land of life. Catherine, aware of a tacit understanding that he was an undeniable husband for an heiress, had nothing to say against him but that he was thoroughly tiresome to her. Mr. Bult was amiably confident, and had no idea that his insensibility to counterpoint could ever be reckoned against him. Klesmer he hardly regarded in the light of a serious human being who ought to have a vote, and he did not mind Miss Arrowpoint's addiction to music any more than her probable expenses in antique lace. He was consequently a little amazed at an after-dinner outburst of Klesmer's on the lack of idealism in English politics which left all mutuality between distant races to be determined simply by the need of a market—the crusades, to his mind, had at least this excuse, that they had a banner of sentiment round which generous feelings could rally—of course, the scoundrels rallied too, but what then? they rally in equal force round your advertisement van of “Buy cheap, sell dear.” On this theme Klesmer's eloquence, gesticulatory and other, went on for a little while like stray fireworks accidentally ignited, and then sank into immovable silence. Mr. Bult was not surprised

that Klesmer's opinions should be flighty, but was astonished at his command of English idiom and his ability to put a point in a way that would have told at a constituents' dinner—to be accounted for probably by his being a Pole, or a Czech, or something of that fermenting sort, in a state of political refugeeism which had obliged him to make a profession of his music, and that evening in the drawing-room he for the first time went up to Klesmer at the piano, Miss Arrowpoint being near, and said—

"I had no idea before that you were a political man"

Klesmer's only answer was to fold his arms, put out his nether lip, and stare at Mr Bult

"You must have been used to public speaking You speak uncommonly well, though I don't agree with you From what you said about sentiment, I fancy you are a Panslavist"

"No, my name is Elijah I am the Wandering Jew", said Klesmer, flashing a smile at Miss Arrowpoint, and suddenly making a mysterious wind-like rush backwards and forwards on the piano Mr Bult felt this buffoonery rather offensive and Polish, but—Miss Arrowpoint being there—did not like to move away

"Herr Klesmer has cosmopolitan ideas", said Miss Arrowpoint, trying to make the best of the situation "He looks forward to a fusion of races"

"With all my heart", said Mr Bult, willing to be gracious "I was sure he had too much talent to be a mere musician"

"Ah, sir, you are under some mistake there", said Klesmer, firing up "No man has too much talent to be a musician Most men have too little A creative artist is no more a mere musician than a great statesman is a mere politician We are not ingenious puppets, sir, who live in a box and look out on the world only when it is gaping for amusement We help to rule the nations and make the age as much as any other public men We count ourselves on level benches with legislators And a man who speaks effectively through music is compelled to something more difficult than parliamentary eloquence"

With the last word Klesmer wheeled from the piano and walked away

Miss Arrowpoint coloured, and Mr Bult observed with his usual phlegmatic solidity, "Your pianist does not think small beer of himself"

"Herr Klesmer is something more than a pianist", said Miss Arrowpoint, apologetically "He is a great musician, in the fullest sense of the word He will rank with Schubert and Mendelssohn"

"Ah, you ladies understand these things", said Mr Bult, none the less convinced that these things were frivolous because Klesmer had shown himself a coxcomb'

What we see here is not a novelist harmed, or disabled, by the intellectual of the *Westminster Review* The knowledge and interest shown, the awareness of the political world, is that of the

associate of Spenser and Mill. But the attitude is not their's. Bult is a far more effective 'placing' of a prevailing Victorian ethos than Podsnap. George Eliot really understands what she is dealing with—understands as well as the professional student of politics and the men of the public world, and more, understands as these cannot. In short, it is her greatness that she retains all the provincial strength and virtue while escaping, as no other Victorian novelist does, the limitations of provinciality.

As for the bad part, there is nothing to do but cut it away—in spite of what James, as Constantius, finds to say for it.

'The universe forcing itself with a slow, inexorable pressure into a narrow, complacent, and yet after all extremely sensitive mind—that is Gwendolen's story. And it becomes completely characteristic in that her supreme perception of the fact that the world is whirling past her is in the disappointment not of a base but of an exalted passion. The very chance to embrace what the author is so fond of calling a "larger life" seems refused to her. She is punished for being "narrow", and she is not allowed a chance to expand. Her finding Deronda pre-engaged to go to the East and stir up the race-feeling of the Jews strikes me as a wonderfully happy invention. The irony of the situation, for poor Gwendolen, is almost grotesque, and it makes one wonder whether the whole heavy structure of the Jewish question in the story was not built up by the author for the express purpose of giving its proper force to this particular stroke.'

If it was (which we certainly can't accept as a complete account of it) built up by the author for this purpose, then it is too disastrously null to have any of the intended force to give. If, having entertained such a purpose, George Eliot had justified it, *Daniel Deronda* would have been a very great novel indeed. As things are, there is, lost under that damning title, an actual great novel to be extricated. And to extricate it for separate publication as *Gwendolen Harleth* seems to me the most likely way of getting recognition for it. *Gwendolen Harleth* would have some rough edges, but it would be a self-sufficient and very substantial whole (it would by modern standards be a decidedly long novel). Deronda would be confined to what was necessary for his rôle of lay-confessor to Gwendolen, and the final cut would come after the death by drowning, leaving us with a vision of Gwendolen as she painfully emerges from her hallucinated worst conviction of guilt and confronts the daylight fact about Deronda's intentions.

It has seemed necessary to carry this examination so much into detail in order to give due force to the contention that George Eliot's greatness is of a different kind from that she has been generally credited with. And by way of concluding on this emphasis I will adduce once again her most intelligently appreciative critic, Henry James.

'She does not strike me as naturally a critic, less still as naturally a sceptic, her spontaneous part is to observe life and to feel it, to feel it with admirable depth. Contemplation, sympathy and faith—something like that, I should say, would have been her natural scale. If she had fallen upon an age of enthusiastic assent to old articles of faith, it seems to me possible that she would have had a more perfect, a more consistent and graceful development than she actually had'

There is, I think, a complete misconception here. George Eliot's development may not have been 'perfect' or 'graceful', and 'consistent' is not precisely the adjective one would choose for it, yet she went on developing to the end, as few writers do, and achieved the most remarkable expression of her distinctive genius in her last work. Her art in *Gwendolen Harleth* is at its maturest. And her profound insight into the moral nature of man is essentially that of one whose critical intelligence has been turned intensively on her faiths. A sceptic by nature or culture—indeed no, but that is not because her intelligence, a very powerful one, doesn't freely illuminate all her interests and convictions. That she should be thought depressing (as, for instance, Leslie Stephen thinks her) always surprises me. She exhibits a traditional moral sensibility expressing itself, not within a frame of 'old articles of faith' (as James obviously intends the phrase), but nevertheless with perfect sureness, in judgments that involve confident positive standards and yet affect us as simply the report of luminous intelligence. She deals in the weakness and ordinariness of human nature, but doesn't find it contemptible, or show either animus or self-deceiving indulgence towards it, and, distinguished and noble as she is, we have in reading her the feeling that she is in and of the humanity she presents with so clear and disinterested a vision. For us in these days, it seems to me, she is a peculiarly fortifying and wholesome author, and a suggestive one. She might well be pondered by those who tend to prescribe simple recourses—to suppose, say, that what Charlotte Yonge has to offer may be helpfully relevant—in face of the demoralizations and discouragements of an age that isn't one of 'enthusiastic assent to old articles of faith'.

As for her rank among novelists, I take the challenge from a representative purveyor of currency, Oliver Elton. What he says we may confidently assume that thousands of the cultivated think it reasonable to say, and thousands of students in 'Arts' courses are learning to say, either in direct study of him, or in the lecture-room. He says, then, in discussing the 'check to George Eliot's reputation' given by the coming 'into fuller view' of 'two other masters of fiction'—Meredith and Hardy—'Each of these novelists saw the world of men and women more freely than George Eliot had done, and they brought into relief one of her greatest deficiencies, namely, that while exhaustively describing life, she is apt to miss the spirit of life itself'. I can only say that this, for anyone whose critical education has begun, should be breath-

taking in its absurdity, and affirm my conviction that, by the side of George Eliot—and the comparison shouldn't be necessary, Meredith appears as a shallow exhibitionist (his famous 'intelligence' a laboured and vulgar brilliance) and Hardy, decent as he is, as a provincial manufacturer of gauche and heavy fictions that sometimes have corresponding virtues. For a positive indication of her place and quality I think of a Russian, not Turgenev, but a far greater, Tolstoy—who, we all know, is pre-eminent in getting 'the spirit of life itself'. George Eliot, of course, is not as transcendently great as Tolstoy, but she *is* great, and great in the same way. The extraordinary reality of *Anna Karenina* (his supreme masterpiece, I think) comes of an intense moral interest in human nature that provides the light and courage for a profound psychological analysis. This analysis is rendered in art (and *Anna Karenina*, *pace* Matthew Arnold, is wonderfully closely worked) by means that are like those used by George Eliot in *Gwendolen Harleth*—a proposition that will bear a great deal of considering in the presence of the texts. Of George Eliot it can in turn be said that her best work has a Tolstoyan depth and reality.

F R LEAVIS

[Concluded]

COMMENTS AND REVIEWS

HENRY JAMES AND THE ENGLISH ASSOCIATION

Henry James, we know, had oddities that grew upon him in his later years. So, if we care to take it, we have an easy explanation to hand when we read the letter he wrote to John Bailey on November 11th, 1912, declining the offered chairmanship of the English Association.

'It is out of my power to meet your invitation with the least decency or grace. For me, frankly, my dear John, there is simply no question of these things. I am a mere stony, ugly monster of *Dissociation* and *Detachment*. I have never in all my life gone in for these other things, but have dodged and shirked and successfully evaded them—to the best of my power at least, and so far as they have in fact assaulted me. All my instincts and the very essence of any poor thing that I might, or even still may, trump up for the occasion as my "genius" have been against them, and are more against them at this day than ever, though two or three of them (meaning by "them" the collective and congregated bodies, the splendid organizations, aforesaid) have successfully got their teeth, in spite of all I could do, into my bewildered and badgered antiquity. I can't go into it

all much—but the rough sense of it is that I believe only in absolutely independent, individual and lonely virtue, and in the serenely unsociable (or if need be at a pinch sulky and sullen) practice of the same, the observation of a lifetime having convinced me that no fruit ripens but under that temporarily graceless rigour, and that the associational process for bringing it on is but a bright and hollow artifice, all vain and delusive (I speak here for the Arts—or of my own poor attempt at one or two of them, the other matters must speak for themselves) Let me even while I am about it heap up the measure of my grossness the mere dim vision of presiding or what is called, I believe, taking the chair, at a speechifying public dinner, fills me, and has filled me all my life, with such aversion and horror that I have in the most odious manner consistently refused for years to be present on such occasions even as a guest pre-assured of protection and effacement I have at such times let them know in advance that I was utterly not to be counted on, and have indeed quite gloried in my shame, sitting at home the while and gloating over the fact that I wasn't present'

How regrettable was this unnecessary scruple, or moroseness, or timidity, in James Surely he could see that it was his duty to lend his prestige to the work of an Association whose explicit aims are 'To uphold the standards of English writing and speech' and 'To spread as widely as possible the knowledge and enjoyment of English Literature' The advantages of associating the maintenance of the essential standards with the cultivation of others for which recognition is more readily got are surely plain if social solidarity can't be promoted for good ends, what hope is there? Good-mixing has its uses

But perhaps James offered himself the excuse that his backwardness was unlikely to set a dangerous example And had he been able to project himself forward some decades and then look back he would no doubt have felt that his expectations had been justified And in *News-Letter No 2* of the English Association (September, 1946)—which might all the same have surprised him—he would have read the appreciative announcement of yet another willing President-elect

'The recent publication of the two first volumes of Sir Osbert Sitwell's autobiography, *Left Hand, Right Hand* and *The Scarlet Tree*, besides being a literary event of the first magnitude has gone some way towards satisfying the interest felt by all lovers of wit, poetry, and "fine writing" in the personality of the head of the Sitwell family Among members of the English Association this interest is naturally heightened by the knowledge that he will be next year's President

'Eighth holder of a Baronetcy created on the eve of the Regency and scion of a house whose roots strike deep into the ancient earth of England, Sir Osbert's tastes and activities have never been those of the typical Derbyshire squire—though, to

be sure, one of his forbears *did* hunt a tiger in the woods about Remshaw. In the realm of letters our President Elect has left hardly any province uninvaded, and he has cultivated each separate field with characteristic energy, originality and distinction.

We are told (in his own words) that 'he has conducted, in conjunction with his brother and sister, a series of skirmishes and hand-to-hand battles against the Philistine' and that he instituted ' "Joy through Intelligence Campaign" (Inc)' And the *News-Letter* proceeds to cull for us the vivacities that stand against Sir Osbert's name in *Who's Who* 'students of that instructive annual have long since perceived with delight that [his] recreations assume a different form every year' 'Among his self-recorded activities perhaps the most fascinating is the Rememba Bomba League, "founded in 1924 reconstituted, 1927" But, alas, the badge of membership is not described'

The English Association, it will be seen, goes ahead wholeheartedly, but without undue solemnity, with its work of upholding standards. The nature of those standards may be gathered from any number of *English*, the quarterly it publishes. The ethos of *English* is fairly suggested by the passages quoted above from the *News-Letter*. Some years ago we commented on the Association's official statement that it 'lived on the earnings' of *Poems of To-Day* (an educational work on which Mr T S Eliot made some blunt remarks in *The Criterion*). The Association has been true to its traditions, as both the reviews and the verse in *English* bear witness. And it is all in keeping that the hundreds of teacher-members who have instructed their pupils in *Poems of To-Day* should now teach them to admire, not only Sir Osbert's prose and wit, but also Miss Edith Sitwell's poetry.

All those who have ever been concerned in any attempt to make university literary studies minister to life would find a file of *English* worth glancing through—for the evidence so abundantly exposed bears even more significantly upon universities than upon schools. It must suffice here to say that if such investigators looked up a 'Sociological Note' that appeared in *Scrutiny* (Vol XII, No 1), under the title 'The Discipline of Letters', they might agree that the analysis given in that Note was strikingly confirmed in *English* the associational spirit prevails completely and complacently—prevails as a defence, certainly *not* of living literature, or of the kind of life of mind and spirit that makes literature a living influence.

'THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT'

It is pleasant, after the foregoing observations, to be able to comment to different effect. Perhaps not everyone who gave up the brightened and modernized *Times Literary Supplement* some years ago has become aware of the recent improvement. It is a marked one, and the *T L S* is now, on the whole, a credit to English critical journalism. The first thing one notes is the dis-

appearance of the anti-highbrow leaders and middles that apparently expressed an editorial policy. It is still necessary to make a distinction between the leading articles, which are usually depressing, and the reviews. Not all the reviews, of course, are good, but enough of them are to make it plain that there is an intelligent and disinterested controlling purpose. Again and again, when the handling in the *TLS* of an author favoured in Bloomsbury is compared with that in *The New Statesman*, it will be found that the *TLS* has performed the function of criticism—and been left to perform it. Here, for instance, from the issue for December 7th, is its placing of an author cried up by the modish gallophilis who made an exhibition of themselves over Aragon.

'There were not a few people in this country who, having read Vercors' *Le Silence de la Mer*, could only raise their eyebrows at the fanfare of trumpets which it had called forth. Now comes an English translation of *La Marche à l'Etoile*, another *nouvelle* of a similar sort, and this time one's eyebrows remain motionless and one's heart sinks instead. For the sentimentality, the imaginative falsity, the nationalistic unction of the second tale by Vercors are distressing in the extreme—the whole concoction, indeed, is shockingly sentimental and a disservice to the restoration of the confidence of the French in themselves.'

AN IRISH MONTHLY

The Bell is a monthly coming from Dublin that is now to be distributed by The Pilot Press (45 Great Russell Street, WC1; the price is 1/6 a copy, the yearly subscription 18/-, plus 1/6 postage). To judge by the December number (in spite of the write-up of Aldous Huxley) this review is intelligently directed: the promise of a lively criticism independent of the English set-up certainly deserves attention. In this number, for instance, 'The Pieties of Evelyn Waugh' by Donat O'Donnell deals aptly with a writer who has not only been acclaimed by Catholic critics, but has also—in spite of the radical anti-Leftish tendencies that Mr O'Donnell diagnoses in him—enjoyed a cult among intellectuals of the *New Statesman* milieu.

'THE KENYON REVIEW' AND 'SCRUTINY'

As far as one can judge with the limited opportunities one has on this side of the Atlantic, *The Kenyon Review* is the best of those American reviews which, published from universities, give American criticism so marked an advantage over British. The issue for Autumn, 1946, contains a long essay by Quentin Anderson, 'Henry James and the New Jerusalem', which no student of James can afford to miss. It deals with the influence on the novelist of his father's system of ideas. The book promised by Mr Anderson is one to look forward to.

In the same issue Mr Eric Bentley, reviewing L C Knights's *Explorations*, hands *Scrutiny* a handsome bouquet

'One may dislike its tone, one may have reservations about this or that, but one should admit that *Scrutiny* is one of the best literary journals of to-day. Why have the books of the *Scrutiny* group never been published in America? *Determinations*, *Fiction and the Reading Public*, *For Continuity*, *Revaluation*, are all among the first books I would recommend to anyone entering upon the serious study of literature. There is much more "new criticism" in them than in all the other works of the "new" school put together. Richards wrote *Practical Criticism* but *Scrutiny* was practical and criticized. Cleanth Brooks wrote notes for a new history of English poetry but in essay after essay *Scrutiny* accumulated a new history *in extenso*. Burke and Ransom extended the boundaries of critical discussion but *Scrutiny* actually occupied the territory and issued new maps. What a pity so many Americans think that the best British literary journal is *Horizon*!

The bouquet, however, is qualified

'Of course *Scrutiny* differs as widely from *Horizon* in its intentions as *KR* does from *Partisan Review*. Indeed *Scrutiny* is the most special and specialized journal of the four. Its offering of creative literature is negligible. Its coverage of foreign literature and of non-literary matters is haphazard and of uneven quality. The number of contributors to the magazine is very small, and of the happy few only three or four seem to have a character of their own, the others use the ideas of the editors as mechanical formulas'

The qualifying nettles should stimulate us to even greater efforts at remedying the shortcomings we are conscious of. We don't, of course (and Mr Bentley hardly suggests it) aim at making *Scrutiny* a vehicle for creative literature that doesn't fall within our conception of the function we can most usefully undertake. The criticism that, to our sense, touches us most nearly is that regarding 'non-literary matters', it seems to us we have given more, and more consistent, attention to music than any other non-specialist review and our music criticism has been intimately related to our literary. But if our provision under the head of 'non-literary matters' hasn't been stronger, that hasn't been for lack of the aim and endeavour. And here comes in a general consideration that Mr Bentley's criticisms invite us to state: we have always been anxious to avoid the illusory 'offering' and the maintenance of any serious standards means, surely, that one can't even suppose—whatever one's illusions about oneself—that there are many possible contributors to choose from. Actually, we think that Mr Bentley overstates the restriction in number, if he looks over the past dozen years of *Scrutiny* he will find (a guess—there is no time for research)

that the tale of contributors runs into three figures. And we have to add that the small nucleus of really *live* contributors to *The Kenyon Review* seems to us to comprise largely the same names as we remember from the *Southern* and have starred elsewhere.

As for the criticism that, in *Scrutiny*, 'the others use the ideas of the editors as mechanical formulas'—it would be interesting to have Mr Bentley's detailed illustrations—it appears to us unjust, and to be based on a misconception, one encouraged by the account sedulously propagated by our academic detractors. *Scrutiny* has no orthodoxy and no system to which it expects its contributors to subscribe. But its contributors do, for all the variety represented by their own positions, share a common conception of the kind of discipline of intelligence literary criticism should be, a measure of agreement about the kind of relation literary criticism should bear to 'non-literary matters', and, further, a common conception of the function of a non-specialist intellectual review in contemporary England. They are, in fact, collaborators (and unpaid). Here is the explanation of the survival of *Scrutiny* for fifteen years, and (if we may say so) of the influence it has, in spite of the fierce and mean hostility of the 'official' literary and academic worlds. If *Scrutiny* had had behind it nothing more positive than the idea of running a high-brow review (and our criticism of the *Kenyon*, as of the old *Southern* and the *Sewanee*, is that we have been able to discern nothing more positive behind them), then there would have been neither influence nor survival. There would certainly not have been the achievement that Mr Bentley credits us with.

And as for foreign literature, we think we have been less inadequate than he might appear to suggest. But certainly we offer no such 'coverage' of Europe and America as *The Criterion* undertook. And it seems to us that if it can't be better done than *The Criterion* did it, then it is hardly worth offering. People, in those matters, are prone to be too easily impressed, and to take the pretension for something real. We, of course, should like to do much more than we have done to help in keeping open the lines of communication with other countries and cultures. But the essential thing, it seems to us, is to maintain standards, except in relation to standards, effectively present, nothing real *can* be done.

FOR WHOM DO UNIVERSITIES EXIST ?

There are two contributions in particular that make the first number of *Universities Quarterly* (5/-) worth looking up—the contributions of Professors H. M. Chadwick and Denis Saurat to the symposium, 'Why compulsory philology?' Professor Chadwick, starting from the assumption (a decidedly heretical one in some influential quarters) that 'It is primarily for students that the universities exist', says, with his great authority, some admirably phrased things about the place of philology and 'history of the language' in university education. Of 'history of the language' he says:

'But the number of those who are really attracted by the subject has always been extremely small—probably well under five per cent. It is generally recognized that the demand for the subject is purely artificial and academic. One can learn to read, write and speak a language, and to appreciate literature, without any knowledge of it. On the other hand, much of the literature cannot be appreciated without a knowledge of history and cultural conditions—for which commonly no provision is made'

Speaking of the 'English' imposed at many—at most—universities, he says

'As they stand, the English courses are attempts to combine elements which are really incongruous. Anglo-Saxon studies gain nothing from their inclusion in the English course—except that they are forced upon a large number of people who do not want them

The subject is treated as if it were "Old High German", and stripped of all the historical and cultural associations which are its chief value. It is time the universities recognized that an Antiquity worth studying is to be found, not only in Greece and Rome, but also in our own country, and this is the connection in which Anglo-Saxon should be studied, and also the early Celtic languages. But the great majority of the students who take English are interested only in modern literature. They gain nothing from Anglo-Saxon'

That Professor Chadwick's achievement in his own chosen field is an illustrious one is well known. It would be pleasant if students for the English Tripos could be aware of the debt they owe to his disinterestedness, courage and insight. The general nature of this can be gathered from his article.

The drift of Professor Saurat's argument is suggested by these extracts

'The ordinary cultured modern Frenchman cannot read French written before Pascal. Why should we try and produce English teachers of French who are better than the cultured French of to-day? We shall obviously not succeed'

'The wealth of French literature since 1870 makes it an educational instrument of the highest value. The first and second years of a three years course (a minimum) ought to be devoted to a study of the French language—as now used—and of French literature from 1870 until to-day. During the third year only should the previous centuries be studied and some elements of philology inculcated'

F R L

BOOK NOT REVIEWED

'MUSIC AND SOCIETY', by W. H. Mellers (Dobson, 8/6)
This book is now out

A PASSAGE TO PALESTINE

THIEVES IN THE NIGHT, by Arthur Koestler (Macmillan, 10/6)

Mr Koestler's new novel will inevitably provoke comparison to its disadvantage, in both cases, with his own best novel, *Darkness at Noon*, a powerful work of art, and with Mr E M Forster's *A Passage to India*, since it too presents us with a picture of conflicting cultures under British rule and resembles *A Passage to India* not only in theme but sometimes in treatment as well. Suffering from its brevity and sketchy method, and from an unconvincing hero for transmitter, it gives little satisfaction as 'art', but then the author calls it a Chronicle and we must take it for what it offers to be. There is a classic example of each of the opposite ways of presenting the victims of persecution so as to arouse sympathy, one by way of the novelist's art and the other by assembling first-hand documents, and Mr Koestler's method falls short of the success of either. In Franz Werfel's *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh*—surely one of the great novels of the world—we see how essential for this purpose bulk is, the slow building-up of sympathy with a nucleus of characters and of appreciation of the alien culture of which they are specimens. Werfel, a Viennese Jew, cannot have known the Armenian history from inside, but though we may suspect that the persecution of the Armenian race by the Young Turks nationalist movement and their resistance to annihilation was for him a symbol of the tragedy that was to take place in Europe (he wrote in 1932), yet that history is completely realized from within, and the beauty and value of that extraordinary ancient culture is conveyed by a wealth of convincing detail, duly subordinated it is true to the total artistic scheme. Mr Koestler has sacrificed the advantages of a massive lay-out, he has moving passages and incidents but they are insufficiently prepared for. His purpose would have been advanced by a great deal more of such incidental pieces of cultural history as that of the Bokharian quarter of Jerusalem and the glimpses he gives of kabbalists and rabbis and of the history of Zionism. On the other hand, the title 'Chronicle' reminds us of the recent success of the objective method achieved by the anonymous author of *The Dark Side of the Moon*¹ in merely getting first-hand accounts of their experiences from Poles transported to the Soviet labour camps during the attempt to absorb Poland made by Russia after the Russo-German pact had been signed. These documents are linked together and placed in a total historical and geographical setting by the author with great skill, but the success of this overwhelming book depends on its not being art but raw fact that is offered us. Mr Koestler has a good many fragments of unassimilated experiences of this kind in *Thieves in the Night*, but they don't, in that medium, tell as they

¹Faber, 12/6

should—in contrast to the use of similar material in his last novel, *Arrival and Departure*

In short, whereas *Darkness at Noon* has behind it, appropriately, the Conrad of *Nostromo* and *Under Western Eyes*, *Thieves in the Night* shows its author as not having completely absorbed Aldous Huxley, Dos Passos and E. M. Forster. He borrows the technique of *U.S.A.* to introduce a series of historical facts and documents into an otherwise stream-of-consciousness novel, but except for this useful trick, these novelists are not really at all *à propos*. Huxley is visible in some embarrassing gratuitous knowingness on the psycho-physical, but Koestler has first-hand experience of life, both varied and intense (for he has been peculiarly alive in the contemporary world) from which to evolve his theorizing and doesn't need Huxley's bookish smartness. Moreover, unlike Huxley and like Conrad, he respects life, and can sympathize with even very unsavoury people. In fact, he seems able to feel sympathy for almost everybody, even for the attitude of the old Arab who when reproached for not working the land like the hated settlers on the Dogs' Hill replies 'You speak like a fool. Is the hill here for me, or am I here for the hill?'—for everybody except Arab agitators and the English governing class.

This was perhaps his real link with Forster. For his presentation of the situation in Palestine had really nothing in common with the other writer's of the Indian problem, in spite of the external parallel between Jew-Arab-British Mandate rule and Hindu-Moslem-British Raj. The parallel has attracted some similar scenes. But there is an edge on the strain between the government representatives and the Hebrew settlers and between all three parties at the Arab peace-making ceremony which is absent from the bridge-party in *A Passage to India*, for Koestler writes from the under-dog's point of view while Forster is still one of the ruling caste, even though blushing for his compatriots' bad manners. Koestler lacks Forster's charm but he gains in seriousness. His comedy is grimmer and his criticism much keener—for instance, his criticism of Jewish characteristics goes much deeper than does Forster's of the English Public School type. And how much more memorable his court-scene, where the illegal immigrant, sentenced to imprisonment and routine deportation, acquires symbolic power with his deafness (due to a blow from a guard at Dachau) that makes the trial incomprehensible to him and with his haunting reiterated cry to the lawyer 'Was ist los? Was hab' ich getan?' Similarly the evasive mysticism that crops up in *A Passage to India* as that book's localisable weakness is replaced by Koestler's real advantage in having an objective, a traditional religious, mysticism for reference, emotionally impressive and rooted in the history of a race. The Social Democracy and Leninism of the young settlements is seen against a background of, sometimes pervaded by, the old religious forms and symbols. The book is held together by an inside account of life in a pioneer Commune, one of 'the hundred odd where individual property is completely

vested in the community, where all men are really equal, and where you can live and die without ever having touched money' [We are told that all reference to this successful working of rural Communism is banned in the Russian press] This fascinating subject leads the narrator to make notes on the drift of culture represented in Palestine which are not the least interesting parts of the book. For instance, whereas the parents, he says, were 'the most cosmopolitan race of the earth', the children, native Palestinians, are what he calls 'Hebrew Tarzans', he finds the new generation and what they stand for 'frightening'. He traces this cultural regression to the language they speak.

'Their parents were notoriously polyglot—they have been brought up in one language which had been hibernating for twenty centuries before being brought artificially back to life. Our children are brought up in a language which has not developed since the beginnings of the Christian era. And so this young generation is brought up in a language which suffers from loss of memory—the humanistic hormones of the mind are absent. In other words, they have ceased to be Jews and become Hebrew peasants.'

Finally Joseph the narrator is driven out of his paradise, the Commune, into the extremists' party by the pressure of the political situation (the book covers the years 1937 to 1939) and we are shown that from the inside too. We are made aware of the force of the arguments by which the methods of terrorism come to seem justified and inevitable—what the author calls 'the logic of the political ice-age'.

To return to the comparison with *A Passage to India* *Thieves in the Night* will not have the same success, at least in this country, though it may well have, and for the same reasons, in the United States (there is a sympathetic American journalist in the book designed expressly). Mr Forster's satire was not unacceptable—he accused the Anglo-Indians (old style) of nothing worse than bad manners and lack of imagination. Of the darker side of British rule in India he made no mention. And the English reader had, to sustain his complacency, the consciousness of the undeniable benefits that British rule had conferred on India. Mr Koestler is less tactful and he is not charming. I predict a hostile Press. *A Passage to India* came at just the right time (1924)—an enlightened public here was ready to feel guilty about India and had nothing much to distract it. Koestler's effort is too late as journalism: the English are long past the stage where they might profitably have felt guilty about the history of British trusteeship of Palestine. And now the atom bomb and the two hundred Russian divisions in Europe have driven the Palestine and the Jewish questions out of any conceivable foreground, they are merely a nuisance. Moreover, there is no longer a public conscience to appeal to, what Mr Koestler calls sometimes the political and sometimes the moral ice-age is upon us. And there is further what

he calls 'the law of universal indifference' 'for the conscience of mankind is a diffuse kind of vapour which only rarely condenses into working steam' The value of this book will probably be what he calls it, that of a chronicle Just as *The Dark Side of the Moon* records not only what Russia did [is doing] to Poles but what typical Soviet procedure is when the U S S R takes control of new territory That is, a general as well as a particular contribution to social history

Q D LEAVIS

ELIOT'S HEIR

A MAP OF VERONA, by Henry Reed (Cape, 3/6)

THE GARDEN, by V Sackville-West (M Joseph, 8/6)

The exceptional unanimity of praise accorded to Mr Reed's volume sends one back for a second look The first had not recommended the quality of Mr Reed's experience Many of his poems seemed wordy failures, and several unambiguously bad Yet Mr Reed did not appear to be a very young man, a beginner, in whom errors of tone, emptiness of gesture, were to be ignored for the occasional successes of verbal talent, or the convincingness of a personal manner, no such signs having revealed themselves to me I had decided that Mr Reed's was merely another collection of verses published earlier in different periodicals It was surprising therefore to find Mr Reed generally acclaimed in terms suggested by the heading to this review And now that second impressions have only confirmed the first, there is cause here for reflection on the kind of reading commonly given to Mr Eliot's poetry, and the quality of that consensus which allows him the title 'great' For the experience in Mr Reed's book is of a paltry kind, and much of it innocently faked The innocence is not only of this wheel-rumbling sort—

I have changed my mind or my mind is changed in me
but of this (perhaps less innocent) in an apostrophe to the city
of Naples

You were an early chapter, a practice in sorrow,
Your shadows fell, but were only a token of pain,
A sketch in tenderness, lust, and sudden parting,
And I shall not need to trouble with you again

The same poem, 'A Map of Verona', concludes with the following
wordplay

And in what hour of beauty, and what good arms,
Shall I those regions and that city attain
From whence my dreams and slightest movements rise?
And what good Arms shall take them away again?

Several of the poems have a background of soldiering Of these, the three poems in the group 'Lessons of the War' were an

indulgence to write They are trivial in feeling, and abjectly self-regarding The appropriate reader composes the poetry

Japonica

Glistens like coral in all of the neighbouring gardens
And today we have naming of parts

Here, as elsewhere in the volume, the author is concerned to present himself in a favourable light, as a gallant fellow compromising whimsically with a hostile world

And in my time I have given them all I had,
Which was never as good as I got, and it got me nowhere
And the various holds and rolls and throws and breakfalls
Somehow or other I always seemed to put
In the wrong place And as for wars, my wars
Were global from the start

It is to the same kind of ingratiating trait that we must ascribe the parody of Eliot which looks like (and is) a prizewinning competition entry It was possibly included to show the author's independence, for the collection is full of reminiscences, rhythmic and verbal, deliberate or otherwise, of Eliot, such as

These are my images The place not worth describing

And elsewhere of Auden (see the poem 'Morning'), and Sassoon (see 'Outside and In') That a poet should wish to learn from Mr Eliot is itself a favourable sign, but the use made here of such borrowings is nowhere justified, and the lack of content is the more painfully audible against the overtones of reminiscence in passage after passage For example, the conclusion of 'Iseult La Belle'

O you who will never be other than children,
Do you think, if I could, I would not reach my hand,
Through the burning mist and the echoing night of black-
ness,
To bless you, soothe you, and guide you through your hell?

This passage, and the following, will suggest the facility of Mr Reed's verse, and full of spurious imagery as of spurious rhythms It is another quotation from 'Iseult La Belle'

I am she, the heart and centre of desire,
The well-beloved, the eternally-reappearing
Ghost on the lips of spring
And do you expect a face
Calm at the heart of torment? Calmness in me, the fear
Of all the poets who dreaded the passing of beauty,
And called on Time to stay his decaying hand,
And who, in their hearts, dreaded more than beauty's
passing,
Its perpetual arrest?
I am that point of arrest,

Though I drop back into oblivion, though I retreat
 Into the soft, hoarse chant of the past, the unsoaring, dull
 And songless harmony behind the screen of stone,
 I do not age
 But I come, in whatever season, like a new year,
 In such a vision as the open gates reveal
 As you saunter into a courtyard, or enter a city,
 And inside the city you carry another city,
 Inside delight, delight
 And it seems you have borne me always, the love within
 you,
 Under the ice of winter, hidden in darkness
 Winter on winter, frozen and unrevealing,
 To flower in a sudden moment, the bloom held high
 towards heaven,
 Steady in the glowing air the white and gleaming calyx,
 Lightness of heart

Far from recalling the tension in the poetry of Mr Eliot, this verse suggests a weak sensibility utterly wordy and smothered in its pretensions. Those hearts and that ghost, the decaying hand and the hoary chant, the city, the delight and the calyx, and above all the movement, are plainly unreal. Mr Reed must be very easily satisfied. In some pages he has attempted the conciseness of symbol. The following is a quotation from one of these, 'The Wall', which has been favourably noticed

The place where our two gardens meet
 Is undivided by a street,
 And mingled flower and weed caress
 And fill our double wilderness,
 Among whose not undismayed
 And unreploached, we idly played,
 While unaccompanied by fears,
 The months extended into years,
 Till we went down one day in June
 To pass the usual afternoon
 And there discovered, shoulder-tall,
 Rise in the wilderness a wall
 The wall which put us out of reach
 And into silence split our speech
 We knew, and we had always known
 That some dark, unseen hand of stone
 Hovered across our days of ease,
 And strummed its tunes upon the breeze
 It had not tried us overmuch,
 But here it was for us to touch

The inane movement here is not a stylization, but the best the author can do with octosyllabic couplets—his way of paying tribute to Marvell. Despite the 'double wilderness', it is anything but witty

The symbol is not made clear but obscured by the 'dark unseen hand of stone' which 'hovers' and 'strums', nor is the function of the alliteration in the fourteenth line apparent. The symbol is obviously meant to have a wide and profound significance, for after ten more couplets the poem concludes

We need not doubt, for such a wall
Is based in death, and does not fall

This pompous clarification is the anti-climax to any intended solemnity, it is clearly a waste of time to search for foundation to that 'wall based in death'. The allegory of 'The Return' is even more facile and unfocussed. The groups of poems 'The Desert' and 'Tintagel' are ambitious but entirely verbal, and both they and the other two long pieces 'Chrysothemis' and 'Philoctetes' contain a great deal of worked-up feeling. For example

The noiseless chant has begun in the heart of the wound,
The heavy procession of pain along the nerve,
The torture-music, the circling and approval
Of the fiery dancers, the days of initiation,
The surge through the heat to the babbling, sweaty vault
Of muttering, unanswered questions, on,
Through a catechism of ghosts and a toiling litany,
To the ultimate sanctum of delirium, unremembered,
The recapitulation of the bitterly forgotten,
And then forgotten again in the break of day

Mr Reed's feelings have no centre, are not controlled. To expect a centre in a first volume is possibly to expect too much, a characteristic tone suggesting a more serious interest in writing poetry than the mere writing of it, would be encouragement enough. There is no such firmness of tone in this volume, but only fluency at low pressure. It is this fluency which is responsible for Mr Reed's acceptance. But without a more impressive content his verse, despite its variety of forms, must remain a flashy claim for attention, of which it has already received more than it deserves.

It would be unfair however to suggest that his fluency had much in common with Miss Sackville-West's. The *TLS* recalls that 'it is nearly twenty years since in *The Land* the author proved that Virgil's *Georgics* are a better model for poetry than the cacophonous school of modern algebraic verse'. The only excuse for noticing this tweedy sequel at all in these pages is that we need to be reminded (as by the animus of the last quotation) that, in Courses of English, 'The Land' is still too often the substitute for modern poetry. It has a suitable bulk and plentiful imagery for visualisers, and the author is still living. Though to read her one would not think so.

What time the English loam is bare and brown,
Elsewhere he roams

Miss Sackville-West also has been reading Eliot, and she too has feelings of superiority about him, in expressing which she archly contemplates an assault on laws less optional than the unwritten ones

Would that my pen like a blue bayonet
Might skewer all such cats'-meat of defeat,
No buttoned foil, but killing blade in hand
The land and not the waste land celebrate

Her credo is equally atavistic

Though I must die, the only thing I know,
My only certainty so far ahead
Or just around the corner as I go,
Not knowing what the dangerous turn will bring,
Only that some one day I must be dead
—I still will sing with credence and with passion
In a new fashion
That I will believe in April while I live
I will believe in Spring

The misuse of language could not go further

G D KLINGOPULOS

MODERN POETIC DRAMA

THE POET IN THE THEATRE, by Ronald Peacock (Routledge, 10/6)

In this book Professor Peacock offers us a series of essays dealing with the relations between poetry and drama in the last hundred years or so. He has not attempted a comprehensive historical survey, nor does he restrict himself to drama in verse, and he is therefore free to concentrate on the significant figures. The authors discussed are chosen for their relation to the central questions 'What, in the nature of dramatic poetry, accounts for its scarcity in certain conditions? Why did poetry come to terms with the theatre only in occasional flashes, and with the greatest difficulty, and in unorthodox ways, in the period under review?' The work of T. S. Eliot is taken as a point of departure, together with a consideration of Henry James and the Drama. This looks like an intelligent approach, and the reader's interest is further stimulated by a straightforward and authoritative style comparatively free from academic clichés and by the author's disinterested concentration on the subject under discussion. He makes first-hand judgments, takes for granted the importance of criticism, and seems to have no extra-literary axes to grind. These merits, though elementary, are not common, and they imply further that Professor Peacock raises a number of interesting questions in a way inviting serious consideration.

The most fundamental criticism seems to be that he has concentrated too narrowly on drama, not relating it closely enough to poetry as a whole or to the general state of literature and civilization during the period. It is, for example, an over-simplification to say that it was the prosaic realism derived from Ibsen, harmful as his influence may have been, which 'dried up poetry and style at the roots' so that the price paid for intellectual freedom was 'poetic life'. In English drama of the late nineteenth century there was no poetic life to be lost: its absence and the prosaic realism of the social problem plays are alike symptoms of more fundamental cultural disorders. I don't think Professor Peacock means to imply any such over-simplified view as this passage suggests, but a closer critical approach to the poetry of the period, non-dramatic as well as dramatic, would have helped him to bring out the deeper underlying causes. Similarly, the reason why he can see Eliot's changed style in the plays as 'a proper development and adaptation of his verse for the conditions of the theatre' is, I think, that he considers the dramatic element in the earlier poems mainly in terms of the creation of characters. 'After creating the "characters" of *Sweeney* and *Prufrock* and *The Lady*, it is but a step to Archbishop Becket and Harry Lord Monchensey'. But the most significant criticism of the verse of the dramas has been that it lacks the dramatic life of the verse of *Portrait of a Lady*, *Gerontion* and *The Waste Land*. This may be connected with the divergent development of Eliot's later poetry outside the theatre: re-reading *The Family Reunion* I feel that one reason for the unsatisfactory impression it leaves is its unsuccessful combination of a style which attempts to carry on from *Sweeney Agonistes* with one related to the very different method of *Four Quartets*. The inadequacy of Professor Peacock's critical treatment of poetry is seen again in his essay on Yeats, whose comparative failure as a dramatist is to be explained rather in terms of the undramatic nature of his verse than from any unpopularity of his symbolic technique or from 'the degree to which he sometimes refines away the material world in too many directions at once'. The objection to a passage of dialogue from *The Dreaming of the Bones* that here 'the poet flies too much in the face of the conditions of a spoken form' almost makes the point, but not quite. And a closer attention to the verse would, I think, have qualified the degree of superiority to Synge claimed for Yeats in his handling of the *Deirdre* legend.

The second main criticism of these essays is that they show no adequate realization of the nature of poetic drama in earlier periods. Not that Professor Peacock's approach is that of Bradley and Wilham Archer: what I mean is perhaps most clearly shown in the following paragraph, which occurs in a defence of Yeats against criticism from the realistic angle:

'Drama had always depended on an action that took a natural form as it is observed in life. It seems almost to be a rudimentary condition of an art that is made up of impersonation,

of presenting a picture of body and speech and behaviour. The logic of appearances, the close analytical plan with its explanation of relationships, the exposition of character and motive within a coherent moral order, the observation of time and space as they are accepted by common sense—all this is the foundation of Sophocles and Shakespeare, of Calderon and Corneille, of Molière and Congreve. Here, moreover, lies the common ground between drama in verse and drama in prose.

The implications of this passage are brought out a little later when he says that in Yeats 'action is not an end in itself flowing from and dependent on what we call "character"', and that with the special technique of the *Plays for Dancers* 'it is not only a question of stylization, of beautiful verse and design, supported by formal elements of chorus and ballet, ennobling an action from life'. One's comment is that this ennobling function hardly seems an adequate account of the 'stylization' of Greek drama, and that in Shakespeare at least there are several instances of action not 'an end in itself flowing from and dependent on character'. Professor Peacock's remark on Yeats 'The coherent action-sequence that illustrates essentially the moral nature of life gives place to a complex pattern communicating a spiritual insight' might be equally well applied to *The Winter's Tale*, and a recognition of Shakespeare's concern with 'symbolism' and his embodiment of 'spiritual insight' would have suggested standards by which to place Yeats. At the same time Professor Peacock is clearly not committed to 'realistic' notions in the narrow sense: in the essay on Eliot he applauds the restoration of conventions in general and that of verse in particular, though on the grounds that by their use Eliot has recovered for drama 'inwardness and detail in psychological portraiture'. In fact, one thing that this book illustrates is how far you can go in intelligent discussion of drama without taking into account the recent re-orientation in Shakespeare criticism, but there is a point where the limitation becomes obvious.

Most of the individual essays contain useful and relevant comments even where one disagrees with the general valuation. Professor Peacock overrates Eliot's dramatic achievement, but he gives a fair account of what was attempted in the plays. The essay on Henry James shows an adequate appreciation of the 'dramatic' element in the novels which appeared after his attempt on the theatre, but it follows the conventional over-estimate of the last three long works (can it really be said that as they get longer and longer they are 'more and more dramatic in conception and more and more concentrated'?) and the equivalent under-valuation of *The Awkward Age*. The relevance of the essay to the main theme lies in the fact that a sense of drama for which there was no room in the contemporary theatre found its outlet in the novel.

Professor Peacock then turns back to Grillparzer, as a survival of the last living school of poetic drama in Europe (that of Goethe and Schiller) and claims that he added to that tradition a new

psychological realism. He goes on to consider Hebbel's anticipation of Ibsen in *Maria Magdalena*, remarking pertinently 'To begin to make tragedy relative is to begin eliminating it. The knowledge that "tragic" circumstances were fifty or a hundred years later no longer so neutralizes them'. The discussion of the 'Effects of Ibsen' is admirably direct in its placing of the whole problem-play tradition¹—'a very powerful writer had a very wrong influence', what is not quite so convincing is the statement that the plays of Ibsen's middle period owe their extraordinary influence to the power of a technique built up in less limited forms of drama. Professor Peacock does not discuss *Brand*, *Peer Gynt* or the late plays in detail, contenting himself with the mere assertion that in them Ibsen is 'most dramatic and most poetic at one and the same time'. The short essay on Shaw is a fairly good appraisal of his methods and limitations, making quite clear the imaginative inferiority which invalidates any comparison (still not unusual) with Jonson or Molière.

The account of Tchekhov gives a useful analysis of his technique and a fair description of his effects, but the high value assigned to his work hardly seems to follow as a logical consequence. For me at least this essay does not remove the suspicion that Tchekhov's blend of satire and wistful pathos was a trick for having it both ways, masking a failure to reach a balanced attitude, an inability to resolve the emotional confusions of the ordinary sensitive person in the modern world. The presentation of him as 'a great idealist' is not convincing. 'Yet in the midst of frustration, even of comicality, these people are for the most part noble. Flat, bored, sterile, helpless, they never cease to break out in impulses towards universal love, happiness, the ideal, beauty in nature and beauty in man'. Lawrence, we remember, had a different word for it. Of Synge Professor Peacock rightly says that his art works within narrow limits and that it had little to offer to the development of drama in England: if he seems to under-estimate Synge's actual achievement it is rather by contrast with his high relative valuation of Yeats. The last dramatist considered is Hofmannsthal, whose most significant work is seen in *Jedermann* and *Das Grosse Welttheater*, where he takes up the popular traditions of morality-play and religious festival to express in poetry and ritual his religious and metaphysical conceptions.

The concluding discussion of Tragedy, Comedy and Civilization asserts that both tragedy and comedy have moral implications and that each is an element of civilized consciousness. It insists especially that 'moral assumptions are at the centre of tragedy', and that 'the tragic values are created by the philosophy and

¹Looking back now on the period that produced [Shaw, Galsworthy and the typical modern successes] it is incredible that it should ever have been called great'. The reviewer in the *Times Literary Supplement* seems to have thought that this was going a little too far.

religion of society' A poet attempting to create original tragic values sacrifices 'cohesion and emotional unity' in his audience, and all pathological or exceptional cases lose their tragic power. The dearth of tragic poetry in our age is 'a failure of civilized consciousness'. There are a number of illuminating remarks in this essay and it will be found more useful than most academic discussions of tragedy, but less than justice is done to the religious element in the tragic experience, the 'breaking of the dykes which separate man from man', the vindication of life at a profound impersonal level.

It can hardly be said that these essays offer a convincing answer to the questions raised in the preface and quoted at the beginning of this review, but at least they make a number of relevant points and suggest possible directions for further critical enquiry.

R G Cox

GUILLAUME APOLLINAIRE

APOLLINAIRE CHOIX DE POÉSIES, edited by C M Bowra (*Horizon*, 10/6)

APOLLINAIRE, by André Rouveyre (*Gallimard*, 120 francs)

Apollinaire's work is not so well known in England nor his reputation so established in France as to render superfluous a longer commentary than Professor Bowra's brief prefatory remarks to this first English edition. Nor are those remarks sufficiently cogent to answer any of the questions that arise from a perusal of this selection: 'songs which have all the ease and grace of the sixteenth century', 'alexandrines that will stand comparison with those of any French poet', 'the new nature of his material', 'his brilliant intellect', 'being quite free from any metaphysical or ethical prepossessions'. Apollinaire relied above all on his sensibility, 'he wrote in a kind of ecstasy which made everything significant and exciting', 'the inexhaustible delight of living'—these are some of the things which suggest that Professor Bowra did not trouble himself greatly with definition in writing his preface. M. Rouveyre's long study might have supplied a need, but proved to be a tedious and uncritical hagiography. The portrait of Apollinaire (alas Wilhelm Apollinaris Kostrowitsky) as seen by M. Rouveyre and in the evidence of Apollinaire's letters, is not an interesting one, although he appears to have been something of a 'character' to his friends. 'Je ne prétends pas donner la clef de son être', writes M. Rouveyre. 'Il faudrait réfléchir longuement et prudemment pour en approcher. Encore y parviendrait-on sans assurance, car il était un homme mystérieux et inconnaissable. Il était aussi un dieu. La terre craquait sous la pression de son imagination. Nous avons craqué, parfois, tous deux, sous la pulsation de notre mutuelle action idéo-magnétique. Avec lui on

était dans la lune Mieux que Dieu, qui fit, dit-on, un homme de rien, Apollinaire en fit beaucoup, lui, avec la même absence de matière' Testimony of this sort, which abounds in M Rouveyre's book, is plainly intended for the amorphous *hebdomadaire-littéraire* public, amongst whom primarily, the Apollinaire legend circulates When M Rouveyre makes a show of criticism, in his last chapter, he offers this 'Sa suppression délibérée de toute ponctuation permettait encore à son jeu mental d'exprimer toutes les insinuations de sa pensée, toutes les inflexions généreuses de son beau délire conscient Elle augmentait son oxygène et alors lui permettait de contenir la complexité, l'étrangeté, le nombre de ses aventures morales, spirituelles et verbales, comme en plein éther, hors du temps et de l'espace' 'Étant donné qu'il pratiquait une consommation d'astres inusitée à ce point jusque-là chez les poètes, et qu'il était le premier et le seul usager immodéré de tels itinéraires célestes

Étant donné an earnest and attentive audience, *étant donné* a sincere post-war search for some construction upon which to rejoice, perhaps, M Rouveyre hopes, he may interest us in a little Apollinaire? For example, in the spectacle of normal feelings turned inside out and stood on their head 'Oh que la guerre est jolie!' The blurb slips easily into cathartic metaphor 'They are rich in those tonic mineral salts of intellectual vitality and the courageous welcoming of experience that most contemporary poetry lacks, and which recall the buoyant spring-time of the age' 'C'est au sens de Virgile que je dis "je chante", quand je le dis—*arma virumque cano*' The last quotation is from Aragon, who, we know, has done for this war what Apollinaire did for the last

Not that Apollinaire hadn't more genuineness than his imitator He was probably an amusing companion and quite a brave man But our concern is with his poetry, and the major claims made for it in this English selection, in which Apollinaire appears as a kind of clown in verse, blest with a strong constitution and high spirits but little capacity for interesting experience or for writing poetry 'On admirait cet air de ténor marseillais d'opéra-comique qu'il avait', writes M Rouveyre 'Comme un véritable Athénien, Guillaume négligeait cette pudeur, à propos de rien, qui est la maladie chrétienne Il était naturel et voilà tout Apollinaire a fait, jusqu'au zénith, les plus éblouissantes pirouettes, et ce clown divin y emportait toujours avec lui son cœur intrépide'

It was to be expected therefore that the relationship which he perceives between different levels of experience, his use of simile and metaphor, should be trivial A surprising image justifies itself only if it immediately fixes and makes accessible a state of thought and feeling, and discloses more and more meaning as it is contemplated and accepted It suggests the degree of control of the writer over his subject matter, the status of what is taking place The simile 'like a patient etherized upon a table' is acceptable because it has this complexity, relevant to the ironic intention of the poem The image suggests the sprawled glow of evening, the

tiredness, the quality of mental activity at the end of the day, a suffused fading pinkness underlined by the horizon, resembling the misty but luminous unconsciousness of ether, combined with the pungency and the orange flavour of the liquid, and the impression of surgical analysis in what is to follow. But the typical images of Apollinaire

'Souvenirs qui n'en faites plus qu'un
Comme cent fourrures ne font qu'un manteau'

'L'éternel avion solaire'

'Les virilités des héros fabuleux érigées comme des pièces
contre avions'

'La religion seule est restée toute neuve la religion
Est restée simple comme les hangars de Port-Aviation'

—have the same simple-minded pointlessness as Mr Spender's pylons 'bare like nude giant girls that have no secret'. These images express not command of experience but the opposite, some pettiness in the impulse to write, and their failure is important in proportion to the amount of emphasis with which they are offered. Apollinaire's novelties are invariably thrown down with some violence, a challenging tone which betrays confused or ingenuous motives, and, reading them, the conviction grows that the stock word 'puéril' with which M. Rouveyre expresses his admiration of the 'mineral salts', would also be applicable to Apollinaire in the current meaning of its English equivalent.

There is reason enough for quoting at length from some of the poems which the fascination of a foreign tongue has led Professor Bowra to admire. The following is a complete poem

Le Chant D'Amour

Voici de quoi est fait le chant symphonique de l'amour

Il y a le chant de l'amour de jadis

Le bruit des baisers éperdus des amants illustres

Les cris d'amour des mortelles violées par les dieux

Les virilités des héros fabuleux érigées comme des pièces
contre avions

Le hurlement précieux de Jason

Le chant mortel du cygne

Et l'hymne victorieux que les premiers rayons du soleil
ont fait chanter à Memnon l'immobile

Il y a le cri des Sabines au moment de l'enlèvement

Il y a aussi les cris d'amour des félins dans les jungles

La rumeur sourde des sèves montant dans les plantes
tropicales

Le tonnerre des artilleries qui accomplissent le terrible
amour des peuples

Les vagues de la mer où naît la vie et la beauté

Il y a le chant de tout l'amour du monde

On one page, under the title 'Il Pleut', several dotted lines are printed vertically which on a second glance, prove to be words. These, if deciphered and transcribed in horizontal lines, discover poetry that has 'the clarity, the ease, the force of all good French verse', previously obscured by 'lyrisme visuel'. The result, after that, is disappointing. In "Les Soupirs du Servant de Dakar" he sketches with poignant insight the feelings of an African soldier torn from his primitive pastoral life to the violent and unintelligible routine of the trenches. The following extracts represent more than half of this poem.

Je revois mon père qui se battit
 Contre les Achantis
 Au service des Anglais
 Je revois ma soeur au rire en folie
 Aux seins durs comme des obus
 Et je revois
 Ma mère la sorcière qui seule du village
 Méprisait le sel
 Piler le millet dans un mortier
 Je me souviens du si délicat si inquiétant
 Fétiche dans l'arbre
 Et du double fétiche de la fécondité
 Plus tard une tête coupée
 Au bord d'un marécage
 O pâleur de mon ennemi
 C'était une tête d'argent
 Et dans le marais
 C'était la lune qui luisait
 C'était donc une tête d'argent

J'ai connu l'affût au bord des marécages
 Où la girafe boit les jambes écartées
 J'ai connu l'horreur de l'ennemi qui dévaste
 Le Village
 Viole les femmes
 Emmène les filles
 Et les garçons dont la croupe dure sursaute

Je me souviens d'un lac affreux
 Et de couples enchaînés par un atroce amour
 Une nuit folle
 Une nuit de sorcellerie
 Comme cette nuit-ci
 Où tant d'affreux regards
 Éclatent dans le ciel splendide

So much for the poignancy and the pastoral. The poem is fairly obviously the product of a lurid and commonplace imagination. He sought new adventures in the world and believed, as "Les

Collines'' shows, that we should look for new possibilities in human nature and that if we can maintain the strength of our desires, we shall be greatly rewarded' Let the verses 'show' for themselves

Certains hommes sont des collines
Qui s'élèvent d'entre les hommes
Et voient au loin tout l'avenir
Mieux que s'il était le présent
Plus net que s'il était passé

Et j'ai scruté tout ce que nul
Ne peut en rien imaginer
Et j'ai soupesé maintes fois
Même la vie impondérable
Je peux mourir en souriant

Habituez-vous comme moi
A ces prodiges que j'annonce
A la bonté qui va régner
A la souffrance que j'endure
Et vous connaîtrez l'avenir

Des bras d'or supportent la vie
Pénétrez le secret doré
Tout n'est qu'une flamme rapide
Que fleurit la rose adorable
Et d'où monte un parfum exquis

And so on for some forty vatic stanzas That Apollinaire considered himself one of the 'collines' and a large one, he does not leave in doubt, and he is accepted as such by his editor 'In "La Joie Rousse'', written at the end of his life, he justified his case' For example, with this

Nous ne sommes pas vos ennemis
Nous voulons nous donner de vastes et d'étranges domaines
Où le mystère en fleurs s'offre à qui veut le cueillir
Il y a là des feux nouveaux des couleurs jamais vues
Mille phantasmes impondérables
Auxquels il faut donner de la réalité
Nous voulons explorer la bonté contrée énorme où tout se
 tait
Il y a aussi le temps qu'on peut chasser ou faire revenir
Pitié pour nous qui combattons toujours aux frontières
De l'illimité et de l'avenir
Pitié pour nos erreurs pitié pour nos péchés

Mais neiez neiez de moi
Hommes de partout surtout gens d'ici

Car il y a tant de choses que je n'ose vous dire
 Tant de choses que vous ne me laisseriez pas dire
 Ayez pitié de moi

'Il y a tant de choses' Yet Apollinaire would have been the last poet to be struck dumb at the vision of the ineffable. A writer could not be more perfunctory or set a higher price on the least of his own creations. For him, of course, there is some excuse. But what is to be made of an invitation such as the following 'Apollinaire, like Rilke and Eliot and Pasternak'? Some doubts must be felt concerning the purposes for which this Big Four is assembled. These doubts Professor Bowra's preface does not remove. There, the impression is given that the writer is protected, by some preconception of the appropriate response, from that open contact with the work under examination, which alone would reveal its quality. When the line 'les becs de gaz pissaient leur flamme au clair de lune' is served up, the editor stomachs it with the uneasy equivocation that 'some may think that he sacrifices charm to exactness, though they can hardly fail to admit that he does at least succeed in being exact'. The line was certainly enough to upset even a thoroughgoing taste for 'le mot juste'. Such a taste may be useful in the translation and construing of texts, but it is of little relevance to the act of reading and judging a poem as a whole.

G D KLINGPOULOS

THE SIGHTS OF CONEY ISLAND

THE COSMOLOGICAL EYE, by Henry Miller (Editions Poetry London, 10/6)

'Everything is sordid, shoddy, thin as pasteboard. A Coney Island of the mind' (Henry Miller)

Whatever is decaying or physically disagreeable always catches Mr Miller's eye. Under the impression that this constitutes 'cosmological vision', he is naturally impelled to let us share it, and when by doing so he can also tidy-up odds and ends of manuscript and produce a book, price 10/6, who can object to the practical streak in his generosity? No one needs be surprised by Mr Miller's single-minded interest in what is moribund or rotten, nor in the proportion of his writing devoted to a detailed examination of it. Mr Miller's view of the artist's function at the present time explains his enthusiasm. 'If you are an artist', he says, 'you have one consolation which is denied the others *you can play the role of undertaker*'. His apparent fascination is simply a warm, professional interest. If he is obsessed with what is putrescent, it is in the interests of hygiene, and his task, like that of a burying beetle, is to search for the corpse and dispose of it. This view of the nature of his calling doubtless explains also the

disproportionate time which Mr Miller spends investigating those places in which rot is most likely to be found

One would not wish to quarrel with Mr Miller's occupation as an undertaker, if he were to set about it in a more efficient way. But, given a corpse, to bury it decently and neatly is the last thing he wishes to do. He must examine it minutely, poke it and pry into it, anxious that he shall be spared no refinement of nausea, having left it until it stinks, he gives it a vigorous shaking and then goes into raptures of disgust and moral indignation over its corruption. This practice makes one doubt his professional ability, and the blustering, hearty, back-slapping manner which he consistently adopts while going about his business is the reverse of the discreet, self-effacing and seemingly behaviour which one has a right to expect of a good undertaker.

Those who mistake loudness for forcefulness, vulgarity for vigour, 'push' for personality and boisterousness for energy, may be impressed by this bit of book-making, others will find that time spent in reading it passes slowly, that the catalogues of what are intended to be highly charged, physically revolting images, are as lifeless as a page of the telephone directory. The slightly more competent autobiographical journalism palls quickly as Mr Miller passes from extravagance to extravagance, unceasingly insisting on what *I* think, what *I* saw, what *I* felt, what a MAN *I* am, through pages and pages of dreary reminiscence. It would be well, however, if those who are impressed by Mr Miller's excited bawling were to examine closely both his prose and his criticism at those points where an unambiguous statement is made. There it will be found that underneath the surface turbulence, a common-place mind is at work in a common-place way. For example, speaking of re-reading the 'truly great authors' he says (rightly of course, but with the tone of our public literary purveyors) that 'we go back to them again and again as to inexhaustible wells of wisdom and delight', that 'a book is a part of life'. The deep hidden rhythm of life is always there—that of the pulse, the heartbeat. This, with trimmings, is the measure of his critical activity. Turning to his prose, one finds, as one might expect, that the 'deep hidden rhythm of life' is something which Mr Miller has read about in D. H. Lawrence, and which must be conveyed in a lush 'aesthetic' prose, or alternatively in staccato 'conversational' bursts enlivened frequently with an expletive (Sometimes expressively rendered ' ' in this edition). A short quotation of the former sort will show adequately its soporific quality.

'I have a tremendous longing for this land that lies at the end of the earth, this irregular spread of earth like an alligator basking. From the heavy, sexless lid of her batted eyes there emanates a deceptive, poisonous calm. Her yawning mouth is open like a vision. It is as if the sea and all who had been drowned in it, their bones, their hopes, their dreamy edifices, had made the white amalgam which is England.'

The whole is informed with a sense of self-importance which makes such commonplace ineptness appear absurd. Mr Miller has no sense of proportion where he himself is concerned, perhaps for this reason the autobiographical note at the end is the most enjoyable piece of work in the book. There we are led through an unconscious parody of the orthodox 'success story'—'I defied my parents and those about me almost from the time I was able to talk. Two years later my father gave me the money to go to Cornell, I took the money and disappeared with my mistress, a woman old enough to be my mother. The most important encounter of my life was with Emma Goldman in San Diego, California. She opened up the whole world of European culture for me. I quit the job without a word of notice, determined to be a writer. From then on the real misery began. 'I was obliged to beg in the streets' etc. But after exposing himself to 'life itself, the life of the streets especially' and reading omnivorously (Proust and Spengler were 'tremendously fecundating') he has realized that his 'aim, in writing, is to establish a greater REALITY' ('I am at bottom a metaphysical writer'), and wants 'to be read by less and less people'. Unfortunately, like his activities as an undertaker, his activities as an esoteric metaphysician are likely to be thwarted by his nature. It's the publicity man in him which frustrates his best intentions.

R G LIENHARDT

THE ENGLISH KAFKA

THE CULT OF POWER, essays by Rex Warner (John Lane, The Bodley Head, 7/6)

This is on the whole, an inoffensive book. Many of the essays deal with the plight of civilization in the spirit and manner of an enlightened editorial in a superior weekly. Mr Warner's sweep is so broad and his statements so general that most of the world's *hommes de bonne volonté* could give a vague assent. The trouble is, that the response evoked by statements such as these, for example,

'Since the age is superstitious we do not even achieve a life that can be called either scientific or efficient, we merely pay lip-service to what is vaguely understood to be admirable, and are encouraged at every turn to accept the advice of people whom we think of as "experts". There is an expert on the atom, an expert on astronomy, an expert on milk marketing and on housing, but there are no experts on how to live, and it seems that this is a subject in which we are not greatly interested'

is as hackneyed as the writer's prose. All this has been said before

and said more forcibly by others. Our task is, as Mr Warner says, 'to enquire what man is, which of his ideals are admirable, which of his habits permanent, and what can be the meaning and purpose of his existence'. That is, our task is not to formulate 'vague and inefficient generalities', but to proceed with the inquiry. Mr Warner may be about to address himself to this task in a later work. In these prize essays he throws out one suggestion—that D H Lawrence has nothing to offer us in the pursuit of such an enquiry.

Since this is a judgment that would be endorsed by many of those who would subscribe to the vaguely liberal generalities that fill the book, since Mr Warner is in this as in so much else merely a watery mouthpiece of contemporary 'enlightened' opinion, there is a clear call for a rejoinder. D H Lawrence would provide one of the most inspiring and profitable starting points for any such fundamental inquiry as Mr Warner desiderates, and is, in my opinion, a far healthier instance than Yeats, of whom Mr Warner approves, of the value of an artist's prescience about the spiritual state of the world. In any 'reevaluation'—and it seems to me that *Scrutiny* would be doing a service by publishing one—D H Lawrence would be seen to deserve even more than the generous praise accorded to him by E M Forster in his celebrated letter to the *Nation and Athenæum*.

The *Nation* and the *Athenæum* both disappeared their modern avatar is the *New Statesman and Nation* in which Mr Warner's treatment of D H Lawrence was passed with approval. To indicate the urgency of a reasoned judgment appealing to disinterested opinion, I append a few extracts from Mr Warner's verdict. In an essay whose theme seems to be that the Tragic Hero in our days is a Moral Anarch, who, after destroying the old system of values, 'can only preserve his confidence by more and more outrageous rebellion, while those who have almost automatically followed him begin to regret the absence of the familiar images he has destroyed', D H Lawrence is cited as an author in whose work the state of mind of the Anarch and his followers can be interestingly exemplified. Lawrence 'had rejected both the system of the past and the lack of system of the present. What was he to do? He attempted to build up a new system for himself and others' which 'was very largely negative, a mere assertion of his denial of the system of his upbringing'. 'The corner-stone of his new system' was the sexual instinct. 'His insistence on blood and sex and maleness is all very well as an individual protest, but it lacks something in order to be a creed that is to bind men together, to give them the assurance which they lack. Men have gone to bed with women for very many years now, and have usually enjoyed it. But this enjoyment is not sufficient in itself to form the basis of a new outlook on life, and Lawrence himself seems to have been uneasily conscious of this'. 'Meanwhile, Hitler and others all over Europe, actuated in part by the same feelings that had moved Lawrence, were evolving a much more successful and

destructive system of ideals. They, too, had inherited the legacy of the moral anarchists, they, too, had revolted against the past and yet felt the insecurity, hated the dissipation of the present. In their system also we find the "dark" forces of Lawrence—blood, sex, virility, violence—but these forces are now no longer centred in the sexual nature of the individual. The consciousness of revolt is still present, but now it is allied with a security that Lawrence never felt. The community to which Lawrence looked forward, the leaders and the led, is established. Men act, instead of wasting their energies in abstract thought. And yet, if Lawrence had seen it, he would have been appalled. There are abundant signs that this monstrous conception of Lawrence is representative.

The representative quality of the essays is equally apparent in the strictly literary criticism. Mr Warner also writes traditionally, notably in defence of the Classics. His style throughout the book is in fact the literary, scholarly style, lacking in vigour, faintly mannered, and ridiculous if read aloud. Often it reads as if he were writing for readers who haven't had Mr Warner's educational advantages, but he wouldn't for the world have them know that he knew it. Here is a snippet, taken at random.

'Few can have watched their step more carefully than Swift. About him there is an almost terrifying precision. He has little of the humanity of Bunyan, none of the gentleness of Cervantes. His unique quality is that *sæva indignatio*, the savage indignation that is like a white-hot fire in which his immensely powerful style is forged.'

By confining myself to the book under review, I have felt justified in writing of Mr Warner as a decent, well-meaning, but rather feeble *vulgansateur* of current 'enlightened' ideas. The publisher's dust cover reminds me that Rex Warner is the author of four novels now appearing in a uniform edition and that V. S. Pritchett has praised them. Even so, this information would not have seemed worth passing on were it not that last year a critical miscellany appeared (containing contributions by young writers representing a fair cross section from *Scrutiny* to *Horizon*) which devoted almost half its space to a symposium on 'Kafka and Rex Warner'. The serious consideration there given and the numerous references to contemporary practice make the incredible appear true. Mr Warner has a genuine vogue in England as an allegorist. So perhaps I should add that those who regard Mr Warner as the English Kafka will find in the present book an authoritative essay on the allegorical method, showing that it 'is used more or less by all great writers' (including Dostoevsky, Dickens and Plato) and that authors such as these, 'because they include more in their survey and, in doing so, blend the poetic truth of their allegory with the prosaic truth of conventional observation' are in a sense '"greater" than the purer allegonists, like Kafka'.

RECORDS

- BARTOK *Quartet No 5* (played by the Hungarian Quartet, H M V)
- STRAVINSKY *Petrouchka* (London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Ernst Ansermet, Decca)
- MAHLER *Symphony No 4* (Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra of New York, conducted by Bruno Walter, H M V)
- WALTON *Viola Concerto* (William Primrose and the Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by the composer, H M V)
- BACH *Concerto for two violins and orchestra* (Arthur Grumiaux, Jean Pougnet, and the Philharmonia String Orchestra conducted by Walter Susskind, Columbia)
- HAYDN *Symphony No 104 in D* (Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Issay Dobrowen, H M V)
- WAGNER *Die Walkure, Act 3* (Helen Traubel, Herbert Janssen, Metropolitan Opera Choir and Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra of New York conducted by Artur Rodzinski, H M V)
- ELGAR *Cello Concerto* (Casals and the B B C Symphony Orchestra conducted by Sir Adrian Boult, H M V)
- HANDEL *The Messiah* (Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Malcolm Sargent, with the Huddersfield Choral Society and James Johnson, Norman Walker, Gladys Ripley, Isobel Bailie, Columbia)

The outstanding recordings in this quarter's batch are the Bartók, the Mahler, and the Stravinsky. The performances are all characterized not only by great virtuosity, but by their authenticity, one feels they are as close an approximation to the composer's intentions as human fallibility is ever likely to permit. I don't know whether it is an unexpectedly encouraging sign of the times that H M V should have chosen to issue the Bartók at the cheaper price, in any case it is a gesture that merits every possible encouragement. Bartók's *Fifth* is a work that used to be considered among his most aggressively and uncompromisingly angular, it still sounds as fresh and vital as it did ten years ago but (seen in the light of his later and ripest work) it now impresses us with the sensuous beauty of its sound texture, combined with the inexorable logic of its thought. I cannot imagine a more sympathetic, or more competent, performance than that of the Hungarian Quartet. These records should on no account be missed.

Bruno Walter's performance of the Mahler is equally convincing and it is to be hoped that before he retires he will add to his existing recordings of Mahler's works his performance of the

Eighth Symphony (the culmination of Mahler's achievement), so that the authentic Mahlerian tradition may be preserved before it is too late. The *Fourth* is, of course, the 'easiest' of Mahler's symphonies, but it is a lovely work and provides a revealing illustration of the transition from Viennese classicism to Mahler's own late work and then to the atonalists.

The recording of both these works is worthy of the performances, that of the Stravinsky has by now achieved an almost international celebrity. It has been said that mechanically these are the best records ever made and I, not being especially well-informed in gramophonic history, wouldn't quarrel with that. Stravinsky's wonderful score deserves the close attention to details of aural effect which this recording gives it, and as a whole the music wears very well. Now that we are able to hear the elaborate texture so lucidly performed with sensitivity and precision, we can see clearly why *Petrouchka* is of such crucial importance in Stravinsky's development, beneath the apparent exoticism this is the first work of Stravinsky which gave intimation of the linear approach representative of his later music.

The two supreme exponents of their respective instruments, Primrose and Casals, give us two 'late romantic' English concertos. Elgar's elegiac work seems to me perhaps his quintessential achievement, and after listening to Casals's performance (followed perhaps by some of his unaccompanied Bach) one is inclined to think that he may be the greatest performer on any instrument living in our time. Comparatively Primrose, though his virtuosity in the scherzo is electric, seems insensitive and lacking in character, but one must remember of course that Walton's concerto, if still the composer's most impressive work, is hardly in the same street as the Elgar, and that Primrose's magnificent performance of the solo part in Berlioz's *Harold in Italy* certainly revealed that he is capable of responding to a melodic line of the greatest subtlety of contour.

The recording of the Walton tends to a 'modern' stridency, as does that of the new versions of the Haydn and, to a lesser degree, the Bach. These are both fine vigorous performances, and one particularly welcomes the use of the harpsichord continuo in the Bach. Issay Dobrowen is a conductor of high intelligence and imagination, one's only regret is that he did not choose to play one of the many unrecorded Haydn symphonies rather than the superb but well-known D major.

One may feel sad too that so much wax and time and money should have been spent on another version of the *Messiah* when so much music of the Bach period and earlier still awaits recording (When is something going to be done for Alessandro Scarlatti?). But I suppose there was a need for a good 'modern' recording of the *Messiah*, and on this one much care has been lavished both from a mechanical and interpretative standpoint. Unlike the recent version of *Dido and Aeneas*, these records are admirably faithful to Isobel Baillie's voice, and the recording courageously refuses to

SCRUTINY

A Quarterly Review

Edited by

D W HARDING

F R LEAVIS

L C KNIGHTS

W H MELLERS

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ANDRÉ MALRAUX AND HIS CRITICS

A NOTE ON THE STATE OF LITERARY CRITICISM IN FRANCE

IN the course of a wireless talk given to Germany in March, 1946 (the English original text is given in the April-June number of *The Adelphi*), Mr Eliot illustrated his remarks by a reference to the history of *The Criterion*. 'In starting *The Criterion* I had the aim of bringing together the best in new thinking and new writing in its time, from all the countries of Europe that had anything to contribute to the common good. I sought therefore first to find out who were the best writers, unknown or little known outside their own country, whose work deserved to be known more widely. Second, I tried to establish relations with those literary periodicals abroad, the aims of which corresponded most nearly to my own.' Mr Eliot names the French, German, Swiss, Spanish and Italian journals with which *The Criterion* maintained connections. It might be interesting to enquire what European periodicals nowadays could bear a similar relation to *Scrutiny*. Visitors to Germany report the great desire of editors there to see 'European' periodicals refounded. The few German periodicals I have seen, however, suffer too much from the chaotic conditions against which they are struggling to be of more than local interest.

When we turn to France the problem is one of number, I have counted more than fifteen *monthlies* (excluding merely regional or occasional reviews) most of which are as large as and many more than twice the size of *Scrutiny*, each provided with its own staff of critics. A careful examination of this mass of critical writing would yield surprising results. At least I was surprised to discover how little help could be derived from the French literary press when I had occasion to comb it for articles on Albert Camus. This absence of strict literary criticism is not a post-war phenomenon. I should say from memory that a study of the back numbers of the *NRF* for the years preceding 1939 would yield very little that could be offered as a model of critical relevance.

Mild research of this kind points to a problem of some importance and raises doubts about the quality of the immense interest in letters shown in France to-day. Clearly only a large-scale investigation could do justice to the problem and, I suspect, first-hand knowledge of what goes on in editorial offices is necessary to explain many features of the literary press. A revised and more comprehensive work than M. Duhamel's *In Defence of Letters* (cf. *Scrutiny* Vol. VII, No. 3, p. 336) would be of great service. But

even as things are, certain aspects of the problem are open to a cursory glance. One of the most striking features of the French literary world is the almost universal respect in which American novelists are held. The translations of Faulkner, Hemingway, Caldwell, Dos Passos and Steinbeck, which began to appear in the 'thirties, have been the most important events in contemporary French literary history. I have no statistics, but a glance at any publisher's catalogue shows the preponderance of American novels over the native product. The leading French writers themselves introduce these novels or comment on them at length in periodicals. M. Sartre reports that 'two thirds of the manuscripts which young writers submit to the review which I direct are written à la Caldwell, à la Hemingway, à la Dos Passos'.

The influence of politics on literature is as strong now as ever in French history. The Marxist debate which occupied and exhausted the English literary world in the pre-war years is still being fought out in French periodicals. For a parallel to the form taken by some of the discussions we must look to Russia rather than to England or America. The pattern of the debate is familiar. In the years before the war we witnessed the Gide exhibition. For a post-war variant we might select the literary squabbles centring round André Malraux. Many literary Communists greeted his earlier novels as admirable instruments in the service of the Cause and Malraux himself seems for a time to have made an effort to write suitable left-wing literature, in *Le Temps du Mépris*, for instance. During the war, however, he parted company with the Communists and is now (I hear) closely allied to de Gaulle. Consequently (one can't help feeling) he has become the target for a good deal of abuse from Communist literary critics.

A few excerpts from an article by Claude Morgan (*Lettres Françaises* 17-1-47) will give the tone of the debate. M. Morgan is replying to readers who had written to enquire why he was always attacking Malraux, 'an author, who, whatever you say, is after all a great left-wing writer'. He admits that such is the general opinion, but claims that Malraux only acquired this reputation because in his search for adventure, and adventure in which he himself could play a leading part, he happened for a time to turn to the left. The real Malraux, he insinuates, is the biographer and would-be ape of T. E. Lawrence, the minister in de Gaulle's cabinet. Malraux showed himself in his true colours, says M. Morgan, when he told the students of the Sorbonne in a discussion of tradition that 'le vrai problème n'est pas celui de la transmission des cultures dans leur spécificité', but 'de savoir comment la qualité d'humanité que portait chaque culture est arrivée jusqu'à nous, et ce qu'elle est devenue pour nous'. The phrase in this speech which inflamed the Communists was, 'il est profondément indifférent, pour qui que ce soit d'entre vous, étudiants, d'être communiste, anti-communiste, libéral, ou quoi que ce soit (these words provoked an uproar) parce que le seul problème véritable est de savoir, au-dessus de ces structures, sous quelle forme

nous pouvons recréer l'homme' M Morgan concludes his article with, 'je ne puis comprendre qu'ayant reçu de telles preuves de sa véritable nature, il se trouve encore, en France ou ailleurs, un seul intellectuel de gauche pour revendiquer Malraux'

If we turn to England we can find the substance of M Morgan's article in *A Note on André Malraux* by Walter Allen¹ who writes 'The framework of the stories, the Chinese communist revolution, for instance, is merely the machinery which enables the (personal) myth to be played out' Where he differs from M Morgan is in showing that this is merely one of the facts about the novels and thus part of the material on which literary criticism has to work, but not in itself grounds for praise or blame It is a matter for regret that Mr Allen did not expand his note His remarks on *La Condition Humaine* are not full enough to give weight to his verdict 'It is, quite simply, a great novel That it happens to be set in a communist revolution is entirely fortuitous'

A determined scrutiny of the French literary press in which the Malraux quarrel was developed in all directions would, I think, bear out the contention that very little of the French literary intelligence is concerned with evaluating literary works, that necessary distinctions, such as that between the author and his work, between the 'message' that can be abstracted from the remarks of any one character in a novel and the total effect of the novel in which the character 'appears', the elementary distinctions without which criticism of fiction cannot function, are thrown overboard when the reviewer sits down to write his article An examination of the two most recent books about André Malraux² by representative critics is offered here as a gesture towards such a scrutiny and as part of the evidence for my unfavourable verdict M Picon's book was very well received in the press and is referred to with respect by M Mauriac This article was written before any reviews of M Mauriac's book could be obtained

M Mauriac lays down a critical principle in his preface which very largely explains most of his and his contemporaries' practice If he had been dealing with a dead author or one incapable of further development, M Mauriac says he would have tried to find 'une idée centrale qui éclaire et ordonne l'oeuvre dans son ensemble' This is apparently what he has done in previous books dealing with Marcel Jouhandeau and Jean Cocteau I have not read these books, but it seems incredible to me that any group of novels

¹This note appeared in *Focus No 2* 'a serial miscellany concerned chiefly with the criticism of contemporary writing Issues are arranged as far as possible on a writer, group of writers, or a literary theme' I quote the blurb since the intention expressed is admirable The contributors, however, have not sufficiently thrashed out the fundamentals of any approach and so have no real common ground

²*André Malraux*, by Gaetan Picon, Gallimard, Paris, 1945, 70 frs
Malraux ou Le Mal du Héros, by Claude Mauriac, 1946, 150 frs.

forming a body of literary work could be subsumed under a single general idea without a degree of abstraction which would involve abandoning the quiddity of the novels and the individual features of each which make it what it is. Fiction does not offer a number of ideas that can be organized and arranged in this way. The attempt to find such a central idea can only succeed if one ignores what I have called elementary distinctions.

M. Mauriac also feels he should apologize for the numerous quotations from Malraux's works which appear in his pages. In defending their presence he claims that by juxtaposing quotations from different novels the author's 'secrets' can be discovered. 'Ce qu'il n'avait pas su, ou ce qu'il n'avait pas osé dire, risquera sans doute d'être formulé, mais l'accent sera mis par cela même sur le sens profond de son oeuvre dont une partie de la richesse cachée verra ainsi le jour pour la première fois. Telle est l'utilité de la critique et sa dignité.' Further, for M. Mauriac, a novelist draws conclusions and these conclusions can sometimes be illuminated by what other writers have written on the 'same' subject. Finally, a point which throws some light on what is expected of a French literary critic, M. Mauriac writes: 'Je sais qu'une oeuvre dans laquelle on ne trouve pas de références paraît facilement plus originale et qu'on loue alors l'écrivain de ne rien donner qui ne soit de son cru; mais il me paraît beaucoup plus important d'être exact que brillant et je sacrifie volontiers ma vanité d'auteur s'il s'agit d'accroître ma récolte ou seulement de m'en assurer. Il reste qu'on peut mériter, à force de travail, de ne plus citer dans une quinzaine d'années, peut-être, me sera-t-il accordé, de consacrer à Malraux un essai où l'on ne trouvera pas deux guillemets.'

The reader will have no difficulty in imagining what kind of criticism to expect from such principles. As an instance of the 'secrets' that can be wrung from the author by the quotation method, M. Mauriac notes that Tchen in *La Condition Humaine* repeats the gesture of self-mutilation each time he is about to murder. M. Malraux himself draws the reader's attention to the repetition. M. Mauriac supposes that André Malraux unconsciously found himself repeating the act and added the comment drawing attention to the repetition. afterwards M. Mauriac's reasons for this hypothesis are revealing. 'Elle (the repeated act) se trouvait dans la ligne du personnage, c'est-à-dire dans celle de l'auteur. Car Malraux n'est pas de ces romanciers qui créent des héros vivant d'une autre existence que la leur.'

Now it is indeed a fact that André Malraux does not succeed in distancing his main characters or in making credible those characters that do not stand in some very close relation to what appear to be his main interests. It is possible to isolate and point to local failures in projection. But the further step of equating author and character seems to me not justified, at least as long as we are confined to the discipline of criticism. By ignoring the distinction M. Mauriac finds himself filling nearly half his book with an account of the nature of the sexual abnormality which he attributed to Malraux.

on the strength of scattered references throughout the novels. Once again he is pushing the evidence too far. There is no doubt that M. Malraux nowhere communicates a strong feeling for normal love and nowhere allows us to suppose that he condemns as worthless or vile the perversions he dowers his characters with. It is true that there are passages where atrocious acts and scenes are introduced without seeming to be an inevitable part of the pattern. Yet the step taken by M. Mauriac leads him straight out of literary criticism. Once this looseness is admitted, it is not surprising to find Malraux described as a triumphant amalgam of D. H. Lawrence and his namesake, the Colonel.

'J'ai souvent rêvé que les deux Lawrence auraient gangé à ne faire qu'un le panthéisme de D-H, tout naturellement, se prolonge en cette étreinte brutale et efficace dont T-E enserra une terre violentée, tandis que l'action victorieuse de ce dernier, commentée par lui d'un point de vue encore un peu trop intellectuel, eût gagné à tenir plus franchement compte de ces forces cosmiques auxquelles l'auteur de *L'Amant de Lady Chatterley* avait arraché quelques uns de leurs secrets. Aussi bien, une oeuvre existe-t-elle, une oeuvre d'homme doublée d'une oeuvre d'écrivain, dans laquelle les enseignements des deux Lawrence viennent se fondre celle d'André Malraux.'

An unexpected by-product of this undignified and useless kind of writing is that the collection of 'parallel' passages brings out the failure of André Malraux to develop. It also reveals to what an extent Malraux is merely an intellectual, that is, a man who formulates general propositions in the abstract and fails to dissolve them in the concrete of the literary work. That so much can be said about Malraux by M. Mauriac's method is, in a word, a radical criticism of Malraux as an artist. A criticism not made explicit by M. Mauriac. This is not surprising, since M. Mauriac makes it clear that he is not interested in the novels, but in discovering through them what he imagines to be Malraux's private thoughts. This has long been a disagreeable trait of French criticism. The following passage is quite explicit.

'Après les épopées de héros uniques et solitaires, le Garin des *Conquérants*, le Perken de la *Voie Royale*, il en est venu avec *La Condition Humaine* et *L'Espoir* à des romans plus complexes où il essaye de présenter dans leurs mutuels rapports de nombreux personnages d'origines et de conditions diverses. Garin, c'était Malraux, et Perken, Malraux. Des Malraux sublimisée, stylisés, passés à l'état de mythes. Mais Kyo, Ferral, Tchen, Katow, mais Manuel, Garcia, tous les personnages de quelque importance de *La Condition Humaine* ou de *L'Espoir*, ce sont encore et toujours Malraux, D'où une certaine confusion que nous empêche de toujours exactement distinguer les uns des autres ces hommes dont ne diffèrent trop souvent que les noms. Nous ne nous arrêterons pas ici aux conséquences littéraires de cette insuffisante

individualisation qui fait, en ce sens, de *L'Espoir* un roman raté. Ce qui compte surtout pour nous, c'est la signification de cet échec sur le plan humain. Nous pressentons alors que *l'autre* hante Malraux dans la mesure où il se révèle incapable de l'atteindre et peut-être même de le concevoir.

* * * *

M. Picon, too, begins with a flourish of critical principles. His plea is for a kind of criticism that dares to handle living authors. Against Albert Thibaudet³ he protests that, so far from abandoning modern literature because it has not been sifted, 'ce tri dans la littérature de son époque, n'est-ce point pourtant ce que nous attendons du véritable critique?' He accuses his contemporary critics of servility and timidity. He remarks with some justice that most books on contemporary literature are nothing but a jungle of names with no attempt to distinguish between significant and insignificant. When a critic does speak up for a contemporary writer, it is an act of friendship, says M. Picon, not an expression of critical judgment. 'Ne serait-il pas opportun que, dans la critique des Lettres, regnent enfin d'autres mœurs?'

M. Picon feels that M. Malraux's generation suffers by comparison with 'la génération royale' which includes Proust, Péguy, Claudel, Apollinaire, Gide, Valéry—'cet âge vraiment classique' (It is time, by the way, that these illustrious reputations were questioned in a serious and responsible spirit). Malraux, he says, is not primarily an artist. 'Si réel, si apparent qu'il soit dans cette oeuvre, l'art n'y est jamais une fin'. Nevertheless he considers Malraux the greatest writer of his generation and one who is *par excellence* our contemporary—'De ce siècle, au sens le plus fort du terme, il mérite d'être appelé le témoin'.

This being so, M. Picon feels unable to judge the novels with detachment. Here, it seems to me, he makes a false distinction which ruins his whole approach. 'C'est dire qu'il existe des oeuvres qui nous offrent des spectacles et d'autres qui proposent des réponses aux problèmes que nous vivons. Celles qui se laissent enfermer dans le domaine de la littérature, et ne prétendent pas être autre chose qu'un objet de contemplation, il est naturel qu'elles ne fassent appel à rien de plus profond en nous que l'émotion et le jugement esthétiques. Mais celles qui s'épanchent hors de la littérature, et reconnaissent les interrogations de l'homme vivant, on comprend qu'elles éveillent des passions à la mesure de celles dont elles témoignent'. All major works of literature invite us to an experience which we are called upon to evaluate to the best of our ability.

³The editors of Albert Thibaudet's posthumous *Histoire de la littérature française de 1789 à nos jours* report 'Je me sens gêné, nous disait Thibaudet, devant la période actuelle. C'est de la littérature non triée, la perspective change du tout au tout. Je vais me borner à un simple schéma'.

On the other hand, M Picon does not surrender entirely to M Malraux. Malraux represents a significant possibility and a temptation. Malraux is for him what Gide was for an older generation. 'Nous ne pouvons plus choisir notre voie sans tenir compte de la sienne'. Here all that can be done is to register a different valuation. Further debate could only be along lines of wider reference. For M Picon's approach is at bottom sentimental, not critical. To the Communist taunt referred to earlier in this article M Picon can only reply, 'Il est déloyal et il est vain de séparer Malraux de ceux avec qui il se veut uni'. He just cannot understand how François Mauriac came to note in his journal 'le point faible de Malraux, c'est son mépris de l'homme'. But he does not attempt to reinterpret the early novels where this contempt is striking.

One result of this uncritical approach is the disconcerting way passages of vague affirmation alternate with the most damaging admissions. Thus, after writing pages on 'la fraternité virile' as a theme in the novels, M Picon comes out with, 'Au fond, Malraux est peu sensible à l'individu, peu sensible aussi à la foule'. But since he never relates the passages where this insensibility occurs to those where he detects 'la fraternité virile' in any particular novel, there is no conflict, the two divergent views never really engage. Instead he invites us to admire the *conflict prométhéen* of André Malraux trying to get into touch with the rest of mankind. He nowhere suggests that this failure of Malraux's casts a strange light on the life-long preoccupation with Man.⁴

It is characteristic of the sentimental approach to substitute rhetorical *bravura* for criticism. Here again we touch on a feature common to a great deal of French literary journalism. A large part of M Picon's book is filled with lyrical passages on the themes that run through Malraux's novels. One of the delicate points in any critical appraisal of Malraux is to determine how to take the recurrent appearances of nihilism. Malraux is fond of using the word *absurde* and his characters often declaim against middle-class society and the nullity of life in general. These attitudes are very often mere verbal exercises because the feelings, etc., referred to are not embodied in an adequate situation. The author may have taken himself very seriously, the point is to determine how seriously these passages can be taken by the reader. It is simply evading criticism to say that Malraux is in the line of Byron and Chateaubriand and leave it at that. The world has changed since the Great Romantics died. To take up their pose to-day is not to be doing what they did. While I am prepared to admit that there may be passages where Malraux's use of the word 'destin' or 'fatalité' does not cover a failure to communicate, I am simply bewildered by the following—a typical quotation and if anything on the mild side.

⁴'Ecrivain, par quoi suis-je obsédé, depuis dix ans, sinon par l'homme?'—*La Lutie avec l'Ange*

'Un souffle désertique a passé sur le monde et le laisse calciné. Riche de sa cruelle lucidité et de ses vaines exigences, l'homme est abandonné à l'intolérable. L'oeuvre de Malraux est l'épopée de la Fatalité qui pèse sur l'homme, le long poème d'une descente aux enfers du malheur humaine. Dans des scènes où s'expriment la pire douleur et la pire humiliation, elle nous met impitoyablement en présence de l'absurde de vivre en présence du néant de l'homme, du néant d'un univers déjà prêt à se refermer sur nos traces et promis lui-même à la dissolution.'

According to M. Picon, Malraux's work is tragic as well as epic. 'Il est aujourd'hui notre premier, sinon notre seul poète tragique nul ne le contestera.' And yet a few lines later it appears that *grand-guignol* is a possible label. This is another of those sudden let-downs! 'Qu'il y ait chez lui, et singulièrement dans *la Condition humaine*, quelque excès, quelque débauche volontaire dans l'horrible—et un côté, si j'ose dire, "grand-guignol"—il se peut.' On the other hand, Malraux is 'plus proche encore de Corneille que de Barrès' and a few lines later Pascal is brought in and Faulkner turned out. This shuffling round of great names—so frequent in French criticism—may or may not be bluff—it is always pointless as long as no precise indication is given of just what at each moment the great Counter has to stand for.

M. Picon, like M. Mauriac in this, feels obliged to distinguish his hero from the two Existentialists, M. Sartre and M. Camus. He affects to be surprised that people should have found similarities of outlook in the works of these three writers. At first he claims to see no similarity at all, but later whittles down the distinction as follows: the Existentialists fail to communicate any sense of positive values, 'soit qu'il manque à leur pensée d'être véritablement sincère, soit que la nature même de leur art, ce qu'il a d'impersonnel et d'abstrait, leur interdise de les transmettre.' What's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. These criteria, if they could be established, might have been used with profit to determine what positive values are successfully communicated in the work of André Malraux.

M. Picon does attempt in a final chapter to regard his hero as an artist. He begins by calling him one of the most intellectual writers in an age of intellectuals. He is also one of the rare critics of our time, and he is a philosopher into the bargain. But his work convinces us, says M. Picon, by its artistic mastery. Here the emptiness of the conventional literary language of appraisal becomes apparent, especially when we come to Malraux's style. M. Picon tries to describe it without once quoting a specimen. We learn that it is 'de l'homme même'—a manly style, not musical or graceful, but powerful, sober and rapid. The whole description might have been written by Quintilian. M. Picot thinks *L'Espoir* stylistically the best of Malraux's books, but not 'le chef-d'oeuvre humain'. There is a musty smell of the schoolroom about this part of the book.

Next comes the vexed question is Malraux really a novelist? (Here M. Picon makes in passing a point he could have used to advantage that the import of the book comes out so often in one or more passages of dialogue in each novel, passages which are not essentially related to the action as a whole) He notes that Malraux's work is a mixture of 'lyrisme' and 'reportage', that there is no serious analysis of the thought or motives of the main characters, and no characters that are not versions of Malraux himself. Yet he says, 'Techniquement, *la Condition humaine* est un chef-d'oeuvre classique où se retrouvent la complexité et les équilibres d'une tragédie d'Eschyle ou de Racine'. This classical perfection is, however, something Malraux must be excused for. M. Picon tries to show that though it may not equal the brilliant new techniques of Joyce, Faulkner or Steinbeck, the classical method suits Malraux's way of thinking.

M. Picon's conclusion is that 'ce que Malraux apporte à la littérature de son siècle relève plus de l'art de l'écrivain que de l'art du romancier. Cette force de vision, ce mouvement et cette fièvre du style, ils sont d'un poète. Cette présence impérieuse de lui-même, qui nous impose tour à tour son exaltation et son angoisse, ce n'est pas la marque du romancier qui cherche à s'effacer derrière ses personnages: c'est le signe indiscutable de l'auteur de confessions ou de mémoires, qui, alors même qu'il invente, ne peut que se raconter. La respiration métaphysique, les horizons intellectuels de cette oeuvre restreignent son fond anecdotique,—le fond essentiel du roman. Ce sens de la grandeur, enfin, cette exaltation héroïque, —ils appartiennent moins au roman qu'à d'autres genres: l'épopée, la tragédie. Mais qu'importe? Il ne s'agit pas de savoir si une oeuvre obéit aux lois du genre dont elle croit relever, mais si elle est, oui ou non, une grande oeuvre—si elle existe, ou si elle n'existe pas. Peu importe que Malraux ait écrit, peu importe qu'il doive écrire de véritables romans. Il suffit qu'il nous ait donné et qu'il nous promette quelques-uns des grands livres de notre temps.'

* * * *

The last number of *Scrutiny* contained some criticism by Mr Bentley of its coverage of foreign literature to which Mr Leavis replied 'we think we have been less inadequate than he might appear to suggest. But certainly we offer no such "coverage" of Europe and America as *The Criterion* undertook. And it seems to us that if it can't be better done than *The Criterion* did it, then it is hardly worth offering. People, in these matters, are prone to be too easily impressed, and to take the pretension for something real. We, of course, should like to do much more than we have done to help in keeping open the lines of communication with other countries and cultures. But the essential thing, it seems to us, is to maintain standards, except in relation to standards, effectively present, nothing real can be done.'

The selection of criticism presented here with all its limitations and modest claims to be fully representative should serve to

corroborate this hesitation to enter into relations which could never be serviceable. Mr Leavis might have glanced elsewhere than at *The Criterion* to find other examples of the contacts desiderated by Mr Eliot leading to exchanges profitable perhaps to the individual authors, who see to it that each other's works get translated and published, but not in the long run helpful to the creation of cultural unity.

H A MASON

THE CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS OF PLANNING AND POPULARIZATION

THE immediate occasion of this article¹ is a short pamphlet by Professor Karl Mannheim, *The Meaning of Popularization in a Mass Society* (Supplement to *Christian News Letter* 227). The assumptions on which Professor Mannheim has based his cultural and social ideas are ones that, partly due to his influence, are popular in certain circles to-day, but that nevertheless reveal a reliance on habits of thought that in some ways might appear to have outlived their usefulness. An examination, therefore, of some elements of Professor Mannheim's theories may help us to understand important features of a type of mind that, despite its insufficiency, is exerting an increasing and, to my mind, largely baneful influence on our daily lives. I am also anxious to bring out Professor Mannheim's cultural views because it seems to me that certain intellectual circles are accepting the social conditions of planning and all that it entails without realizing that these changes may have repercussions that would be culturally

¹This critique was in the editors' hands for publication before Professor Mannheim's death. It is not, then, offered as a general obituary estimate of his work. As its manner shows, it was addressed to a living writer in the hope of eliciting a reply—a hope that, unhappily, is gone. But the critic, who wrote with a deep sense of the present gravity of the issues, still (with the editors) feels that gravity to be no less decisive than it was, and feels also that he could not have put his case more scrupulously than he does here. The editors are convinced that, on matters of such great importance, there is an urgent need for responsible critical thought of this order.

unfortunate. It may be that in the conflict of loyalties 'culture' will have to go by the board, but it is as well to realize something of what is likely to happen.

But first it will be necessary to consider Professor Mannheim in a wider context. For Professor Mannheim occupies an influential position. Formerly Professor of Sociology in the University of Frankfurt-on-Main, he has recently been connected with the London School of Economics and is now Professor of Education at the University of London. He has brought with him habits of thought derived from a somewhat different mental atmosphere than is to be found in this country—an atmosphere whose characteristic thought movement is from the general to the particular and one which tends to ignore the pettifogging details of 'the stubborn and irreducible' facts of nature at the behest of a more grandiose mental conception of the ideal. It is a viewpoint sanctioned by the Kantian distinction between the empirical and the rational ego. This division (in much German thought) between the outer realm of action and the inner realm of consciousness has led to that fundamental imbalance between the lessons derived from the experience which their great technical efficiency has provided, where all is mechanical obedience, subordination and discipline, and those gained from a feeling of spiritual freedom, of complete intellectual self-determination in the mental sphere. Hence, perhaps—to translate into a common, and because common, significant metaphor—the nation of sleep-walkers, though sleep-walkers whose dreams follow a similar pattern, and hence the incompatibility of the sleep-walker in the domain of the shop-keeper, whose characteristic philosophical expression, from that close association with everyday material objects that buying and selling imply, and from a contemplation of those general laws that the 'state of the market' impels on the attention, lies in an enlightened pragmatism. Yet we are at present witnessing, through the hospitality so rightly extended to foreign refugees, the bringing to bear of just such an alien tradition of outlook on our characteristic English ways of thought, a tradition that serves to stimulate as all new ways of thought are stimulating but one which contains certain dangers unless we realize fully the implications of those new assumptions of use and wont.¹

For Professor Mannheim is one of the chief exponents of planning in the country and through his own works—particularly his *Man and Society*, published here in 1940—and his general editorship of Kegan Paul's International Library of Sociology and Social Reconstruction, is concerned to persuade us of the necessity of taking this step for the preservation of our way of life. Of course Professor Mannheim is not the first and only planner, and the

¹This contrast, admittedly based on popular generalizations about national character very properly suspect, nevertheless by its very persistence seems to point to certain endemic qualities to be found in the two nations. The Germans themselves have not been backward in admitting its truth.

influence, pervasive throughout the 'thirties and increasingly important much earlier, of the rigid systematized thinking of the German Marx, has already prepared many of the intellectuals to listen sympathetically to other thinkers of a similar tendency. Now a plan² (a word closely associated with military and scientific operations where the relevant factors are reasonably confined, the resources capable of rational assessment and where there is an immediate, restricted and clearly apprehensible end in view) is always the work of the conscious intellect abstracting from the totality of existence certain only of its characteristics and seeking on a basis of this abstract conception of reality, to realize certain ends. These ends can only be achieved by imposition of means of varying degrees of incompatibility with the living organisms that are the objects of the planner's concern. That any rigid attempt thus to impose means in the larger field of the totality of human society must prove incompatible in this way is certain because no human mind, nor any set of human minds, however able, can adequately assess those imponderables which escape the notice of the cognitive ego in its conscious attempt to fixate the conditions and limitations of being. Even in military matters where, as I say, the end seems to be quite clearly understandable—the need to defeat the enemy—the plan may—and in fact on one side, must—go astray, if not immediately, at any rate (as in the case of Hannibal) in its further consequences. Even the conception of the end in view is subject, of course, to the individual limitations of the

²I have only space to subject the small pamphlet quoted above to detailed analysis, and these remarks on planning must be taken in a generalized sense, though they refer to certain features of Professor Mannheim's own schemes. I believe, however, that the whole of Professor Mannheim's work on planning would repay analysis of the type to which the late Professor Susan Stebbing subjected the work of Professors Jeans and Eddington, and E. H. Carr. This, however, would provide matter for a book, not an article. Here I can only commend to the attention the chapter which Professor Mannheim would no doubt regard as an adequate reply to my strictures. It appears in *Man and Society* and is called 'Real understanding of freedom a prelude to action' (cf. the comment on the use of the word 'real' below). There we are urged to forego 'the luxury of arbitrary interference' (note the emotively charged words to describe what we would at present refer to as our 'freedom') to attain a 'higher level of freedom' as a result of a contract to establish the plan. But the establishment of a plan seems to me to lead inevitably, despite all the grand talk about 'higher level of freedom' to the type of situation discussed in the later part of this article. Even in Professor Mannheim's own analysis, freedom merely appears as an item in the plan, *i.e.*, we shall apparently be directed when and where to be 'free' ('freedom can only be secured by *direction from the key points*'! *Op. cit.* p. 379—my italics). (One may be permitted a little polite scepticism.)

planners because of the ultimate imperfection of the human mind. It is perhaps a sign of the inadequacy of Professor Mannheim's outlook that it was not until a friend pointed it out to him that he appears to have realized the existence of the problem, 'Who is to plan the planners?'

Any plan will, in fact, bear witness ultimately to just those values that the planners think desirable. It is characteristic, too, that when Professor Mannheim, in the pamphlet referred to above, turns to define those groups which are to be the sources of original inspiration, the leaders of the dynamic society—presumably the planners themselves—he has to confess that they 'constitute a class which is hardly capable of scientific definition'. And then, more revealingly still, he admits that 'there is no objective measurement that can be applied, and the judgment depends largely upon the personal valuation of the observer'—a statement which seems to me to destroy the whole basis of Professor Mannheim's activities, for we are once more thrown back on the 'chaos' (as Professor Mannheim conceives it) of the liberal era, depending on the clash of individual or group valuations with the additional disadvantage that whichever group comes out on top is presumably to impose its views on the rest. Moreover, such values as the planners can conceive are, if Professor Mannheim's writings are any indication, on a high level of abstraction. The argument is conducted always on an abstract plane, in a vocabulary largely latinate, and the metaphors he employs are frequently derived from science, mechanical things ('mechanism' is a favourite word) and military tactics. A plan, of course, must involve thinking of people in terms of labelled groups, and of the individual only in accordance with those abstract qualities that make him the member of a group, just as a military commander thinks of his men according to their technical capacity as fighting men and not as lovers, fathers, writers of poems, nor as possessing the characteristics of living, developing, organic human beings. Any plan, in fact, implies the imposition of something dead—because abstract and preconceived—on the living organism and may well be related in some way or other to the death wish. Once the attempt is made to put the plan into operation in all its necessary rigidity, the attitude of the planner must be that of Procrustes or else his plan breaks down. Admittedly a certain amount of improvisation may be possible, and to give him his due, it is obvious that Professor Mannheim is as anxious to preserve what he calls 'democratic freedom' as words will permit. What he does not appear to see is that the planner is bound up with the logic of his own position. Once improvisation passes a certain mark the plan disappears and the end in view suffers a considerable mutation. We are then back, in fact, in the old *laissez-faire* habit of patching which is just what the planner wishes to avoid. Improvisation therefore is only possible within certain strict limits, however well-intentioned the planner may be. Hence the necessity to the planned economy of the concentration camp. Professor Mannheim expresses it

'It (*i.e.*, planning) is not the treatment of symptoms but an attack on the strategic points, fully realizing the result'

The clinical and military metaphors are significant and the satisfying sense of a comprehensiveness in assault which can so easily degenerate into ruthlessness, is to be noted. It is however just that inability of the human mind to assess fully the result that vitiates the planner's claim to omniscience.

Again, it is interesting to note that the planner adds one more to those schemes of a material Utopia that have replaced the older idea of pie-in-the-sky by the promise of a whole pastrycook's shop round the corner at the price of submission to the impersonality of the plan. A further aspect of the plan's appeal lies in the fact that it is associated with that wish to control the future which has been one of the most potent manifestations in Western thought of the individual's desire to perpetuate himself as a protection against the disintegration of time. But in this case there is a significant twist, the individual finds his protection in the future of the community and in the anonymity that that implies, responsibility for the future is pushed on to the impersonal forces involved in the proper working of society that the plan implies, and is to a considerable extent removed from the care of the individual. It is interesting, though perhaps a trifle unfair to Professor Mannheim, to compare the planner's brand of futurity with that of the Macbeths. Lady Macbeth also had the same desire to grasp the future.

Thy letters have transported me beyond
This ignorant present, and I feel now
The future in the instant

Now this conquest of the future can be conceived of in two ways, at the one extreme the individual can assert his individual ego at the expense of the natural order of the community, which is Macbeth's way, or by a process of seeing things only in the abstract he can seek to sink his individualism in that of the artificially created group and persuade himself that his identity is best preserved by contact with it. Hence the popularity to-day of the various social 'isms, in most cases motivated by a desire to shift the responsibility of individual conduct on to the impersonal processes of the social mechanism. In Shakespeare's day there still existed a natural order, based on the rhythms of the seasons and of the crops in a community still primarily agricultural in its being, by which to judge the disintegrating effect of the assertion of the individual will, but now it is impossible to conceive of the sinking of the individual in the—and this is the point—purely man-made and mechanical conception of the planner's community without seeing in such a project a definite regression. There is no escape from the burden of self-consciousness that three centuries of individual assertion have brought about, by the planner's attempt to identify his will with that of the community and to assure the

future on the basis of the anonymity—flatteringly termed integration—that such an identification implies. For both the plan and the acceptance of the plan are the products of an age which feels its fundamental insecurity and turns aside from the fulness of life at the behest of the clearly defined but rigid. Such phenomena are related to the rise to power of the lower-middle classes in the person of the bureaucrat—a manifestation which is at once a cause and a symptom of the increasing mechanization of life and of the impersonality of human relationships. Hence the continual complaint among intellectuals of a lack of vitality (no longer a bang but a whumper) of which the extreme expression on the upper levels of society is the necrophilia of people like Dali⁸ and among the lower-middle class is the cult of violence—the method of self-assertion adopted by the fundamentally insecure—implied in fascism and communism. It is chiefly because the English body politic, partly no doubt because of its insularity, has succeeded in retaining a certain *organic* (as opposed to a mechanical and imposed) quality of interrelated social obligations (*c p* the English eighteenth-century aristocracy with the French) that planning is less popular here than elsewhere.

But there are one or two other interesting features of the planner's dream of the future that merit consideration before we turn more particularly to those educational plans of Professor Mannheim's that are to materialize his vision of the new community. Professor Mannheim postulates a dynamic society. Convention he regards as stultifying, his outlook implies ever a reaching out towards the socially new and he looks upon the

'continual emergence of groups who will originate dominant ideas and form or change the sensibility of their time'

as desirable

This emphasis on the new—which incidentally is curiously at odds with other features of Professor Mannheim's thought, as we shall see later—no doubt is meant to provide the obverse side to that lack of individual responsibility which submission to a plan implies. What society lacks in depth it is to make up in movement. Now, of course, it is perfectly true that societies do become fossilized, and there is always a danger that life will become stereotyped and conventional. Nevertheless it is the emphasis that Professor Mannheim places on the idea of continual change and the naïveté of his approval of an endless series of mutations that invite the strongest condemnation. Conventions of conduct and morality sum up, in the sphere of the imponderables, the wisdom of the race and are not to be abandoned lightly. They provide a certain atmosphere of emotional security, which is necessary to all development, and which comes from a sense of being in the right relationship to established rhythms of life. It is one of the great faults of our

⁸Note the fact that surrealism was a *fashionable* cult

present-day urban scientific civilization that the rate of change and the mobility of population is so great that the individual has no time to draw strength from the embodied wisdom that forms tradition, for tradition is the result of growth and implies a relationship of a very different sort from the mechanically imposed community of the planner. Tradition can, of course, be stultifying and cramping, for life must be lived forwards and not backwards, yet it can only be lived forwards satisfactorily in terms of the experience gained from the past (though at the same time, it may be added in parenthesis that, paradoxically enough, experience gained from the past is never adequate to enable the individual to assess completely the requirements of the future). Hence the need of change; but hence the need of a change adequately related to experience gained from, and based on a respect for, the past, the past history of the race. Indeed this continual grasping after the new, as Shakespeare realized, related as it is to the desire of futurity examined earlier, is always a characteristic of a *lack of being*, whether of an individual or a communal level. Macbeth, in seeking to assert his individual ego against the traditional relationships of respect to his king, suffers throughout the play a progressive loss of being which in the end takes from him even 'the taste of fears', makes life an endless succession of to-morrows without meaning, and turns him into the dwarfish thief that Malcolm's forces so contemptuously seek out. And here Shakespeare symbolically reveals that only those who can draw nutriment from established relationships are capable of full development. It is Macbeth's rejection of Duncan's offer, expressed metaphorically in terms of *natural growth and development*—

I have begun to plant thee, and will labour
To make thee full of growing

—that leads to his downfall. Professor Mannheim, whose mechanical outlook is in direct contradiction of all that wisdom has previously found satisfying, reflects the growing impersonality of human relationships in the superficiality of his thought mirrored in the abstractions he uses.

The ground is now prepared for a closer investigation of one particular aspect of Professor Mannheim's outlook—his attitude towards education. In his view, if a mass-planned society is to be anything but a society of termites, education must play an important part in fitting the individual to respond to the new ways of thought discussed above. An analysis of his suggestions may show us more fully the reasons which lie behind the inadequacy of his views. His ideas on education can well be judged from this extract from *Man and Society*

'Sociologists do not regard education solely as a means of realizing abstract ideas of culture, such as humanism or technical specialization, but as part of the process of influencing men and women. *Education can only be understood when we know for*

what society and for what social position the pupils are being educated Education does not mould men in the abstract but in and for a given society'

So much for the liberal view that the aim of education is the development of the potentialities of the individual. Whatever Professor Mannheim thinks the sentences in italics mean, and however much he may protest that such is not his aim, it is difficult to see how an education preconceived in such a manner is to differ from propaganda for a particular type of society. It has to be admitted that even in the most liberal view the development of the individual is bound to be restricted by the preconceptions derived both by the teacher and the taught, partly from the limitations of the individual mind, and partly from the influence of the environment. All notions of being are set in a particular context, and freedom must always be relative, as can be seen from what has been said above about the healthy features of traditional modes of conduct, its incidence raises such questions as freedom from and for what? But to make only one aspect of the individual—his social—the ultimate criterion of value is not only to make man the end and aim of all things, but is also to rely on a singularly restricted view of the nature of that man. For a man is an individual as well as a social being, and outside himself he has duties to a super-personal set of values as well as to other people. A man must always be prepared to accept a certain amount of responsibility for the conduct of others, because of a sense both of obligation and of charity. Nevertheless there seem to be limits beyond which the individual's responsibility does not and must not, for the sake of his integrity, go. The fact that that limit is extremely difficult to define does not seem to me to be an adequate excuse for shirking the responsibility, for indeed, as I have said, it appears that theories of Professor Mannheim's type are attractive to many people largely because they shelve the whole question of the individual's responsibility for himself.

It is not difficult to see that Professor Mannheim makes out a superficially attractive case for mass education by appealing to certain vulgar prejudices that are likely to evoke an enthusiastic response from many educational circles to-day. First comes the attack on superior persons—here equated with 'closed academic circles', who appear to favour 'an artificial clumsiness', and who cultivate an 'academic aloofness which finds life sublime only in a kind of stratosphere when our minds are kept safely at a distance from suffering and vulgarity'. It would take too long to discover to what an extent these academic circles are fictions of Professor Mannheim's imagination. A visitor to this year's exhibition at the Royal Academy might tend to favour the general direction of Professor Mannheim's attack although he must perforce regret the crudity of its expression, nevertheless there are, to my own certain knowledge, academic circles as keenly alive intellectually as any others to be found, and the whole attack on the academic is to be

deprecated as part of that movement which acclaims the superficial and irresponsible and that is so debasing the standards of our time. To put it another way when some people attack the academic we may be prepared to give them a sympathetic hearing, because they themselves attain a measure of achievement that gives them the right to be listened to, when Professor Mannheim does so, we tend to regret the passing of standards which, however inadequate in certain ways they may be, at least represent a sufficient degree of intellectual rigour to provide a refreshing comment on the shallowness of Professor Mannheim's social theories.

But to continue with Professor Mannheim's views on the nature of those who are responsible for our cultural heritage. Culture, he thinks, is not to be the prerogative of the educated few, and though the original thinker is to play an important part in the evolution of our dynamic society (what happens, I wonder, to the original thinker who does not think in concordance with the dictates of the society and of the social position he occupies?) he desires that new truths, new ideas should be accessible to all, only so can the society become integrated. Hence the necessity of popularization, of a type that will not merely provide a 'dilution of real substance', but be a 'creative dissemination'. The whole problem, indeed, resolves itself into the 'dissemination of the substance of culture without diluting it'.

Of these creative disseminators, these who 'originate at lower levels', Professor Mannheim gives several examples which it will be instructive to examine later. For the moment it is necessary to look at the distinction mentioned above between 'culture' and the 'substance of culture'. Professor Mannheim recommends a process by which this creative dissemination is to take place. It involves fastening on what is essential—a democratizing process that is

'a search for truth that is in principle accessible to everybody, not because it is trivial or diluted, but because it is reduced to the really human elements of knowledge'

What do certain of these phrases mean? Truth for instance, or such elements of truth as man's mind can encompass, is always in principle accessible to everybody provided they have the mental capacity to grasp the 'truth' that is presented to them, here, the words, if they convey anything at all, merely fog the issue. It is not a question of whether the truth in principle is there to be grasped, but whether the type of people Professor Mannheim has in mind are in fact capable of grasping it. Then what are the *really human* elements in knowledge? All the elements in knowledge are human (except, possibly, the religious would argue, those elements based on revelation, but I do not think that that is the contrast Professor Mannheim has in mind) in that they are the products of human intelligence in its relationship to the other (human and non-human). In so far as the words have any meaning at all, they appear to be purely emotive—to give a warm comforting

sense of togetherness in contrast to that academic aloofness of which Professor Mannheim so strongly disapproves. The word 'real' too, is a stumbling-block in all this sort of writing. In a contemporary journal (*Pilot Papers*), Mr Jarvis in an article on Discussion Groups quotes this passage with approval, and states that

'Adult education for democracy ought to concern itself with the real contemporary problems of real people'

How does one qualify to become a *real* person with a *real* problem? The only way it is possible to give it a meaning is to make it refer to

'the type of person of whom I socially approve interested in the sort of problem I regard as important'

Its aim however is to gain approval, in an age that is so loosely pragmatic in its outlook as our own, the sense of being in touch with what the writer conceives to be 'reality' which the use of the word 'real' (and 'contemporary') here gives, conveys a comforting impression of concern for immediate issues, so much more satisfying to a certain type of mind than a more careful definition of the issues involved would be.

Previously, however, Professor Mannheim has given a clue to the origin of this idea of the 'essential'

'Descartes, for example, in his treatise on method suggests the need for getting away from the complexity of scholastic discussion and the dogmatism of closed groups. He made it a criterion for the new type of thought that it should be clear and distinct'

We have already seen that Professor Mannheim associates himself, in his emphasis on the new, with a type of anti-historicism that is in fact typically Cartesian. Descartes, in fact, comes at the beginning of that process—associated with the scientific revolution—of abstraction of a particular kind which involves the seizing on certain features only in a totality presented and seeing in those elements the 'real' as opposed to the fictitious qualities 'accidentally' associated with them. He asserts the power of the cognitive ego—*cogito ergo sum*—and makes the abstractions of the cognitive ego the basis of the identity of the individual. It is the work of people like Descartes—and, despite differences of method, of Bacon, too—that gives the truth to Nietzsche's remark that the Lutheran Reformation was the indignation of the simple against the complex.⁴ Such a process of simplification is inherent in the scientific outlook, for at least in its earlier stages it involved a surrender of the complexity of the rationalizing intellect (as that was understood in the middle ages) to requirements imposed by the urge to

⁴Descartes, of course, was an orthodox Catholic, but his philosophical work is spiritually akin to the revolt that Luther represents against the complexity of the mediaeval outlook.

investigate certain elements only abstracted from the material world presented to the mind. When Descartes conducted his experiment with the wax, he found what he thought was the 'essential' element connecting the hard wax with the melted. What he did not see was that that 'essential' element was only the essential element for certain purposes, and that those qualities of hardness, yellowness, etc., that the wax possessed under certain external conditions of temperature, etc., were just as 'real' as that idea of the wax that he arrived at by comparing the hard and the molten wax. The same process can be examined in the changed attitude towards language that Mr L C Knights, in an interesting essay on Bacon based on Mr T S Eliot's remark about the dissociation of sensibility that set in during the seventeenth century, examines.⁵ A comparison of the Shakespearean and the Baconian use of metaphor shows the difference between a use of language springing from the awareness of the interrelated quality of the various planes of human existence, and one that denotes the dominance of certain aspects of the mind—especially of the assertive will and of the calculating intellect working towards limited ends assessable in terms of 'practical' politics—over the rest. Bacon's metaphors and similes are, indeed, purely illustrative, the points of contact do not create an awareness in the mind of any possible modes of relationship but merely result from the realization of certain abstract similarities between the tenor and the vehicle which will serve to illustrate a meaning already completely formed. As Mr Knights expresses it

'the whole trend of Bacon's work is to encourage the relegation of instinctive and emotional life to a sphere separate from and inferior to the sphere of thought and practical activity'

This long aside on Bacon and Descartes has been worth while because it shows the beginning of a process that has led directly to Professor Mannheim's educational theories. The aims—those of control and mastery over the environment—are the same. The temper of mind is similar, even Professor Mannheim's style exemplifies what three centuries of Cartesian abstraction can do. The whole of his view on popularization based on an entirely fictitious relationship between 'knowledge' and the 'essentials' of knowledge, stands revealed as a further example of that process of abstraction that Descartes applied to his piece of wax. For as soon as we start reducing anything to its essentials, we have to ask ourselves 'essential for what purpose?' Yellowness and hardness may well be the essential qualities of wax if our interests are those of a painter. Any idea which is stated in different simpler terms becomes immediately a different idea, it may bear some relationship to the statement of the original idea just as requests framed in the form of 'Please be quiet' and 'Shut up' bear some

⁵L C Knights 'Bacon and the Seventeenth-Century Dissociation of Sensibility', *Explorations*, Chatto and Windus, 1946

relationship to an expressed desire for tranquillity. But there is a whole world of difference between the emotional context of the two clauses, a difference which is just as real as the relationship of the two to a third impersonal translation. It is precisely because he tends to think on a certain level of abstraction that Professor Mannheim makes the mistake of imagining that any idea can be reduced to a simpler form than that in which it already exists and *still remain the same undiluted idea*. It is, of course, frequently possible to break up propositions about the nature of human existence and the requirements of man into a number of simpler elements for the purpose of examining each element in detail, but to mistake any one of those simplifications for the essential serves only to betray the nature of the interest of the person directing the scrutiny unless backed by the prevailing emphasis of the originator of the idea, and even then, no idea can ever truly be stated in any other terms but those in which it has been first formulated, varying degrees of approximation are alone possible, though admittedly necessary for the purpose of argument.

When we turn to examine those examples of the substance of culture which Professor Mannheim gives, any remaining doubts about the inadequacy of his outlook are dispelled. His remarks about jazz—an example he gives of the possibilities of popularization—are too obscure to admit of discussion, though the manner in which he concedes the necessity of an appeal to a connoisseur for the purpose of distinguishing the ‘work of routine’ from the genuine ‘ecstasy’ seems to me, if it means what it appears to mean, to give his case away. His other example of ‘creativity’ at a lower level is Noel Coward who apparently

‘conveys a new type of vibration to a simpler type of mind’

and is not to be considered as a

‘publicity agent for those who create on a higher plane’

We may well absolve Mr Coward from the latter charge, for there is nothing in his work that shows even the slightest awareness of the work of those who create on a higher plane. It is still more difficult to discover the precise nature of the new vibration Mr Coward is supposed to convey to any mind at all. His plays of high society merely demonstrate the emotional and intellectual sterility of the class he deals with, and in so far as they introduce an audience drawn from another social class to modes of conduct different from those to which it is accustomed, they merely serve to corrupt, because of the complete lack of seriousness of the characters portrayed. His plays based on middle-class morality which are symptomatic of his late development only show the shrewdness with which he has managed to assess the movements of public opinion. Far from being an originator, he is content to reinforce in his capacity as paid entertainer, whose function it is to give the public what it wants, the prejudices of his audience.

This can be demonstrated from the fact that his problems are, when examined critically, really bogus problems. *Brief Encounter*, for instance, which in its earlier stages seemed to show a certain capacity for realizing the complexities of an emotional situation, though the triviality of the characters prevented it from assuming any great importance, is falsified at the end, when, by giving the wife the husband to fall back on, it is shown that the problem hardly existed at all, the audience is sent away happy in the feeling that it has both got its cake and eaten it. To state that this sort of stuff gives us

'the same unexpected shock which undermines our complacency when we enjoy great art or listen to a great orator'

provides a measure by which we can judge the depth of Professor Mannheim's appreciation of artistic seriousness.⁶

Not is it sufficient to appeal to mediaeval times as providing a precedent for the capacity to express a common experience at a number of levels, for the situations of mediaeval and modern man are quite different in several important respects, as can be deduced from what has been said above. The mediaeval age had a unifying principle that lay outside the social order, but even so it is useless to imagine that the theologian and the peasant paid homage to the same God or that any mediaeval theologian would have been muddle-headed enough to imagine that the peasant had somehow seized upon the 'essential' feature of the God that he worshipped.⁷ The difference which may partly explain Professor Mannheim's approach, lies in the fact that the mediaeval peasant was not in a position to impose his views on the rest of society as his modern counterpart, the urban proletarian, in a mass social order, is capable of doing, for it is hard to avoid the conclusion that Professor Mannheim is subconsciously rationalizing a state of affairs that, once political power has been placed in the hands of those not conspicuously capable of undertaking the responsibility, as it now has, can only be made endurable by sentimentalizing the nature of the forces faced with the necessity of achieving some sort of order in the present chaos. Professor Mannheim's views are in fact symptomatic of a period that has sought relief from the complexity of living and from the tensions of the age by the creation of new, simplified, *social* mythologies, the nineteenth-century myth of the noble savage has been replaced by the myth of the noble scion of the masses who is to provide us with those expressions of genuineness, spontaneity, dynamism, creativity, originality and all those other qualities which the superficial taste of our age finds so desirable.—

⁶This, of course, is not meant to deny that Mr Coward has talent in certain directions

⁷The comment of William Blake to the effect that the fool sees not the same tree as a wise man is relevant here

What god, man, or hero
Shall I place a tin wreath upon!

Professor Mannheim, for all the scientific colouring of his writing all too frequently utters the sentiments and employs the stale vocabulary of our outworn romantics who, symptomatically, find 'ecstasy' one of their highest words of praise

I hope what I regard as the insufficiency of some of Professor Mannheim's views has now been sufficiently demonstrated, but a word of warning must end this. These criticisms of Professor Mannheim's ideas must not be taken as arguments against all forms of popularization, provided the popularizer is completely aware of what he is doing he performs a very useful function. One would have imagined that the work of the late Susan Stebbing⁸ and Mr J L Russell⁹ would have provided sufficient warning against a particular type of popularization that Professor Mannheim's views would seem to foster. Yet it is obvious, of course, that simplification—for the student in the text-book, for instance—is essential, certain simplified features of any subject must be grasped before it can be appreciated in its full complexity. But it must always be understood that what is being presented is not some quintessential knowledge that obviates the necessity of hard work and unremitting labour later, but a different set of ideas that bears a relationship of varying degrees of crudity to the original. Provided that is realized, the popularizer performs a useful and desirable function in society. I have merely been concerned here to combat the idea, flattering to the common man, but vicious in its implications for our society, that what the popularizer can present is as good as—indeed almost preferable to—what can only be grasped by mature intelligences and complex minds. It would be a grave disservice to mankind and to those values that mankind has, at great pain and sacrifice, gradually evolved, to suggest anything different.

G H BANTOCK

⁸*Philosophy and the Physicists*, by L. Susan Stebbing, an analysis of the popular philosophy of Jeans and Eddington

⁹'The Scientific Best-seller', by J L Russell, printed in *Determinations*, edited by F R Leavis

THE NOVEL AS DRAMATIC POEM (I):

'HARD TIMES'

HARD TIMES is not a difficult work, its intention and nature are pretty obvious. If, then, it is the masterpiece I take it for, why has it not had general recognition? To judge by the critical record, it has had none at all. If there exists anywhere an appreciation, or even an acclaiming reference, I have missed it. In the books and essays on Dickens, so far as I know them (except R. C. Churchill's essay in this journal), it is passed over as a very minor thing, too slight and insignificant to distract us for more than a sentence or two from the works worth critical attention. Yet, if I am right, of all Dickens's works it is the one that has all the strength of his genius, together with a strength no other of them can show—that of a completely serious work of art.

The answer to the question asked above seems to me to bear on the traditional approach to 'the English novel'. For all the more sophisticated critical currency of the last decade or two, that approach still prevails, at any rate in the appreciation of the Victorian novelists. The business of the novelist, you gather, is to 'create a world', and the mark of the master is external abundance—he gives you lots of 'life'. The test of life in his characters (he must above all create 'living' characters) is that they go on living outside the book. Expectations as unexact as these are not, when they encounter significance, grateful for it, and when it meets them in that insistent form where nothing is very engaging as 'life' unless its relevance is fully taken, miss it altogether. This is the only way in which I can account for the neglect suffered by Henry James's *The Europeans*, a work that I mention because it too, like *Hard Times*, is a moral fable, and because one might have supposed that James would enjoy the advantage of being approached with expectations of subtlety and closely calculated relevance. Fashion, however, has not recommended his earlier work, and this (whatever appreciation may be enjoyed by *The Ambassadors*) still suffers from the prevailing expectation of redundant and irrelevant 'life'.

I need say no more by way of defining the moral fable than that in it the intention is peculiarly insistent, so that the representative significance of everything in the fable—character, episode, and so on—is immediately apparent as we read. Intention might seem to be insistent enough in the opening of *Hard Times*, in that scene in Mr Gradgrind's school. But then, intention is often very insistent in Dickens, without its being taken up in any inclusive significance that informs and organizes a coherent whole, and, for lack of any expectation of an organized whole, it has no doubt been supposed that in *Hard Times* the satiric irony of the first two

chapters is merely, in the large and genial Dickensian way, thrown together with melodrama, pathos and humour—and that we are given these ingredients more abundantly and exuberantly elsewhere. Actually, all the Dickensian vitality is there, in its varied characteristic modes, which have the more force because they are free of redundancy: the creative exuberance is controlled by a profound inspiration.

The inspiration is what is given in the grim clench of the title, *Hard Times*. Ordinarily Dickens's criticisms of the world he lives in are casual and incidental—a matter of including among the ingredients of a book some indignant treatment of a particular abuse. But in *Hard Times* he is for once possessed by a comprehensive vision, one in which the inhumanities of Victorian civilization are seen as fostered and sanctioned by a hard philosophy, the aggressive formulation of an inhumane spirit. The philosophy is represented by Thomas Gradgrind, Esquire, Member of Parliament for Coketown, who has brought up his children on the lines of the experiment recorded by John Stuart Mill as carried out on himself. What Gradgrind stands for is, though repellent, nevertheless respectable, his Utilitarianism is a theory sincerely held, and there is intellectual disinterestedness in its application. But Gradgrind marries his eldest daughter to Josiah Bounderby, 'banker, merchant, manufacturer', about whom there is no disinterestedness whatever, and nothing to be respected. Bounderby is Victorian 'rugged individualism' in its grossest and most intransigent form. Concerned with nothing but self-assertion and power and material success, he has no interest in ideals or ideas—except the idea of being the completely self-made man (since, for all his brag, he is not that in fact). Dickens here makes a just observation about the affinities and practical tendency of Utilitarianism, as, in his presentment of the Gradgrind home and the Gradgrind elementary school, he does about the Utilitarian spirit in Victorian education.

All this is obvious enough. But Dickens's art, while remaining that of the great popular entertainer, has in *Hard Times*, as he renders his full critical vision, a stamina, a flexibility combined with consistency, and a depth, that he seems to have had little credit for. Take that opening scene in the school-room.

"'Girl number twenty'", said Mr Gradgrind, squarely pointing with his square forefinger, "I don't know that girl. Who is that girl?"

"Sissy Jupe, sir", explained number twenty, blushing, standing up, and curtsying.

"Sissy is not a name", said Mr Gradgrind. "Don't call yourself Sissy. Call yourself Cecilia."

"It's father as call me Sissy, sir", returned the young girl in a trembling voice, and with another curtsy.

"Then he has no business to do it", said Mr Gradgrind. "Tell him he mustn't. Cecilia Jupe. Let me see. What is your father?"

"He belongs to the horse-riding, if you please, sir"

Mr Gradgrind frowned, and waved off the objectionable calling with his hand

"We don't want to know anything about that here You mustn't tell us about that here Your father breaks horses, don't he?"

"If you please, sir, when they can get any to break, they do break horses in the ring, sir"

"You mustn't tell us about the ring here Very well, then Describe your father as a horse-breaker He doctors sick horses, I dare say?"

"Oh, yes, sir!"

"Very well, then He is a veterinary surgeon, a farrier, and horse-breaker Give me your definition of a horse"

(Sissy Jupe thrown into the greatest alarm by this demand)

"Girl number twenty unable to define a horse!" said Mr Gradgrind, for the general benefit of all the little pitchers "Girl number twenty possessed of no facts in reference to one of the commonest animals! Some boy's definition of a horse Bitzer, yours"

* * * *

"Quadruped Graminivorous Forty teeth, namely, twenty-four grinders, four eye-teeth, and twelve incisive Sheds coat in the spring, in marshy countries, sheds hoofs too Hoofs hard, but requiring to be shod with iron Age known by marks in mouth" Thus (and much more) Bitzer

"Now, girl number twenty", said Mr Gradgrind, "you know what a horse is"

Lawrence himself, protesting against harmful tendencies in education, never made the point more tellingly Sissie has been brought up among horses, and among people whose livelihood depends upon understanding horses, but 'we don't want to know anything about that here' Such knowledge isn't real knowledge Bitzer, the model pupil, on the button's being pressed, promptly vomits up the genuine article, 'Quadruped Graminivorous' etc, and 'Now, girl number twenty, you know what a horse is' The irony, pungent enough locally, is richly developed in the subsequent action Bitzer's aptness has its evaluative comment in his career Sissie's incapacity to acquire this kind of 'fact' or formula, her unaptness for education, is manifested to us, on the other hand, as part and parcel of her sovereign and indefeasible humanity it is the virtue that makes it impossible for her to understand, or acquiesce in, an ethos for which she is 'girl number twenty', or to think of any other human being as a unit for arithmetic

This kind of ironic method might seem to commit the author to very limited kinds of effect In *Hard Times*, however, it associates quite congruously, such is the flexibility of Dickens's art, with very different methods, it co-operates in a truly dramatic and profoundly poetic whole Sissie Jupe, who might be taken here

for a merely conventional *persona*, has already, as a matter of fact, been established in a potently symbolic rôle she is part of the poetically-creative operation of Dickens's genius in *Hard Times*. Here is a passage I omitted from the middle of the excerpt quoted above

'The square finger, moving here and there, lighted suddenly on Bitzer, perhaps, because he chanced to sit in the same ray of sun-light which, darting in at one of the bare windows of the intensely whitewashed room, irradiated Sissy. For the boys and girls sat on the face of an inclined plane in two compact bodies, divided up the centre by a narrow interval, and Sissy, being at the corner of a row on the sunny side, came in for the beginning of a sunbeam, of which Bitzer, being at the corner of a row on the other side, a few rows in advance, caught the end. But, whereas the girl was so dark-eyed and dark-haired that she seemed to receive a deeper and more lustrous colour from the sun when it shone upon her, the boy was so light-eyed and light-haired that the self-same rays appeared to draw out of him what little colour he ever possessed. His cold eyes would hardly have been eyes, but for the short ends of lashes which, by bringing them into immediate contrast with something paler than themselves, expressed their form. His short-cropped hair might have been a mere continuation of the sandy freckles on his forehead and face. His skin was so unwholesomely deficient in the natural tinge, that he looked as though, if he were cut, he would bleed white.'

There is no need to insist on the force—representative of Dickens's art in general in *Hard Times*—with which the moral and spiritual differences are rendered here in terms of sensation, so that the symbolic intention emerges out of metaphor and the vivid evocation of the concrete. What may, perhaps, be emphasized is that Sissie stands for vitality as well as goodness—they are seen, in fact, as one, she is generous, impulsive life, finding self-fulfilment in self-forgetfulness—all that is the antithesis of calculating self-interest. There is an essentially Laurentian suggestion about the way in which 'the dark-eyed and dark-haired' girl, contrasting with Bitzer, seemed to receive a 'deeper and more lustrous colour from the sun', so opposing the life that is lived freely and richly from the deep instinctive and emotional springs to the thin-blooded quasi-mechanical product of Gradgrindery.

Sissie's symbolic significance is bound up with that of Sleary's Horse-riding, where human kindness is very insistently associated with vitality. The way in which the Horse-riding takes on its significance illustrates beautifully the poetic-dramatic nature of Dickens's art. From the utilitarian schoolroom Mr Gradgrind walks towards his utilitarian abode, Stone Lodge, which, as Dickens evokes it, brings home to us concretely the model régime that for the little Gradgrinds (among whom are Malthus and Adam Smith) is an inescapable prison. But before he gets there he passes the

back of a circus booth, and is pulled up by the sight of two palpable offenders. Looking more closely, 'what did he then behold but his own metallurgical Louisa peeping through a hole in a deal board, and his own mathematical Thomas abasing himself on the ground to catch but a hoof of the graceful equestrian Tyrolean flower act!' The chapter is called 'A Loophole', and Thomas 'gave himself up to be taken home like a machine'

Representing human spontaneity, the circus-athletes represent at the same time highly-developed skill and deftness of kinds that bring poise, pride and confident ease—they are always buoyant, and, ballet-dancer-like, in training

'There were two or three handsome young women among them, with two or three husbands, and their two or three mothers, and their eight or nine little children, who did the fairy business when required. The father of one of the families was in the habit of balancing the father of another of the families on the top of a great pole, the father of the third family often made a pyramid of both those fathers, with Master Kidderminster for the apex, and himself for the base, all the fathers could dance upon rolling casks, stand upon bottles, catch knives and balls, twirl hand-basins, ride upon anything, jump over everything, and stick at nothing. All the mothers could (and did) dance upon the slack wire and the tight-rope, and perform rapid acts on bare-backed steeds, none of them were at all particular in respect of showing their legs, and one of them, alone in a Greek chariot, drove six-in-hand into every town they came to. They all assumed to be mighty rakish and knowing, they were not very tidy in their private dresses, they were not at all orderly in their domestic arrangements, and the combined literature of the whole company would have produced but a poor letter on any subject. Yet there was a remarkable gentleness and childishness about these people, a special inaptitude for any kind of sharp practice, and an untiring readiness to help and pity one another, deserving often of as much respect, and always of as much generous construction, as the every-day virtues of any class of people in the world'

Their skills have no value for the Utilitarian calculus, but they express vital human impulse, and they minister to vital human needs. The Horse-riding, frowned upon as frivolous and wasteful by Gradgrind and malignantly scorned by Bounderby, brings the machine-hands of Coketown (the spirit-quickening hideousness of which is hauntingly evoked) what they are starved of. It brings to them, not merely amusement, but art, and the spectacle of triumphant activity that, seeming to contain its end within itself, is, in its easy mastery, joyously self-justified. In investing a travelling circus with this kind of symbolic value Dickens expresses a profounder reaction to industrialism than might have been expected of him. It is not only pleasure and relaxation the Coketowners stand in need of, he feels the dreadful degradation of life

that would remain even if they were to be given a forty-four hour week, comfort, security and fun We recall a characteristic passage from D H Lawrence

'The car ploughed uphill through the long squalid straggle of Tevershall, the blackened brick dwellings, the black slate roofs, glistening their sharp edges, the mud black with coal-dust, the pavements wet and black It was as if dismalness had soaked through and through everything The utter negation of natural beauty, the utter negation of the gladness of life, the utter absence of the instinct for shapely beauty which every bird and beast has, the utter death of the human intuitive faculty was appalling The stacks of soap in the grocers' shops, the rhubarb and lemons in the greengrocers' the awful hats in the milliners all went by ugly, ugly, ugly, followed by the plaster and gilt horror of the cinema with its wet picture announcements, "A Woman's Love", and the new big Primitive chapel, primitive enough in its stark brick and big panes of greenish and raspberry glass in the windows The Wesleyan chapel, higher up, was of blackened brick and stood behind iron railings and blackened shrubs The Congregational chapel, which thought itself superior, was built of rusticated sandstone and had a steeple, but not a very high one Just beyond were the new school buildings, expensive pink brick, and gravelled playground inside iron railings, all very imposing, and mixing the suggestion of a chapel and a prison Standard Five girls were having a singing lesson, just finishing the la-me-do-la exercises and beginning a "sweet children's song" Anything more unlike song, spontaneous song, would be impossible to imagine a strange bawling yell followed the outlines of a tune It was not like animals animals *mean* something when they yell It was like nothing on earth, and it was called singing Connie sat and listened with her heart in her boots, as Field was filling petrol What could possibly become of such a people, a people in whom the living intuitive faculty was dead as nails, and only queer mechanical yells and uncanny will-power remained'

Dickens couldn't have put it in just those terms, but the way in which his vision of the Horse-riders insists on their gracious vitality implies that reaction

Here an objection may be anticipated—as a way of making a point Coketown, like Gradgrind and Bounderby, is real enough, but it can't be contended that the Horse-riding is real in the same sense There would have been some athletic skill and perhaps some bodily grace among the people of a Victorian travelling circus, but surely so much squalor, grossness and vulgarity that we must find Dickens's symbolism sentimentally false And 'there was a remarkable gentleness and childishness about these people, a special inaptitude for any kind of sharp practice'—that, surely, is going ludicrously too far?

If Dickens, intent on an emotional effect, or drunk with moral enthusiasm, had been deceiving himself (it couldn't have been innocently) about the nature of the actuality, he would then indeed have been guilty of sentimental falsity, and the adverse criticism would have held. But the Horse-riding presents no such case. The virtues and qualities that Dickens prizes do indeed exist, and it is necessary for his critique of Utilitarianism and industrialism, and for (what is the same thing) his creative purpose, to evoke them vividly. The book can't, in my judgment, be fairly charged with giving a misleading representation of human nature. And it would plainly not be intelligent criticism to suggest that anyone could be misled about the nature of circuses by *Hard Times*. The critical question is merely one of tact: was it well-judged of Dickens to try and do *that*—which had to be done somehow—with a travelling circus?

Or rather, the question is: by what means has he succeeded? For the success is complete. It is conditioned partly by the fact that, from the opening chapters, we have been tuned for the reception of a highly conventional art—though it is a tuning that has no narrowly limiting effect. To describe at all cogently the means by which this responsiveness is set up would take a good deal of 'practical criticism' analysis—analysis that would reveal an extraordinary flexibility in the art of *Hard Times*. This can be seen very obviously in the dialogue. Some passages might come from an ordinary novel. Others have the ironic pointedness of the school-room scene in so insistent a form that we might be reading a work as stylized as Jonsonian comedy. Gradgrind's final exchange with Bitzer (quoted below) is a supreme instance. Others again are 'literary', like the conversation between Gradgrind and Louisa on her flight home for refuge from Mr James Harthouse's attentions.

To the question how the reconciling is done—there is much more diversity in *Hard Times* than these references to dialogue suggest—the answer can be given by pointing to the astonishing and irresistible richness of life that characterizes the book everywhere. It meets us everywhere, unstrained and natural, in the prose. Out of such prose a great variety of presentations can arise congenially with equal vividness. There they are, unquestionably 'real'. It goes back to an extraordinary energy of perception and registration in Dickens. 'When people say that Dickens exaggerates', says Mr Santayana, 'it seems to me that they can have no eyes and no ears. They probably have only *notions* of what things and people are, they accept them conventionally, at their diplomatic value'. Settling down as we read to an implicit recognition of this truth, we don't readily and confidently apply any criterion we suppose ourselves to hold for distinguishing varieties of relation between what Dickens gives us and a normal 'real'. His flexibility is that of a richly poetic art of the word. He doesn't write 'poetic prose', he writes with a poetic force of evocation, registering with the responsiveness of a genius of verbal

expression what he so sharply sees and feels. In fact, by texture, imaginative mode, symbolic method, and the resulting concentration, *Hard Times* affects us as belonging with formally poetic works.

There is, however, more to be said about the success that attends Dickens's symbolic intention in the Horse-riding, there is an essential quality of his genius to be emphasized. There is no Hamlet in him, and he is quite unlike Mr. Elot.

The red-eyed scavengers are creeping
From Kentish Town and Golders Green

—there is nothing of that in Dickens's reaction to life. He observes with gusto the humanness of humanity as exhibited in the urban (and suburban) scene. When he sees, as he sees so readily, the common manifestations of human kindness, and the essential virtues, asserting themselves in the midst of ugliness, squalor and banality, his warmly sympathetic response has no disgust to overcome. There is no suggestion, for instance, of recoil—or of distance-keeping—from the game-eyed, brandy-soaked, flabby-surfaced Mr. Sleary, who is successfully made to figure for us a humane, anti-Utilitarian positive. This is not sentimentality in Dickens, but genius, and a genius that should be found peculiarly worth attention in an age when, as D. H. Lawrence (with, as I remember, Mr. Wyndham Lewis immediately in view) says, 'My God! they stink' tends to be an insuperable and final reaction.

Dickens, as everyone knows, is very capable of sentimentality. We have it in *Hard Times* (though not to any seriously damaging effect) in Stephen Blackpool, the good victimized working-man, whose perfect patience under infliction we are expected to find supremely edifying and irresistibly touching as the agonies are piled on for his martyrdom. But Sissie Jupe is another matter. A general description of her part in the fable might suggest the worst, but actually she has nothing in common with Little Nell: she shares in the strength of the Horse-riding. She is wholly convincing in the function Dickens assigns to her. The working of her influence in the Utilitarian home is conveyed with a fine tact, and we do really feel her as a growing potency. Dickens can even, with complete success, give her the stage for a victorious *tête-à-tête* with the well-bred and languid elegant Mr. James Harthouse, in which she tells him that his duty is to leave Coketown and cease troubling Louisa with his attentions.

'She was not afraid of him, or in any way disconcerted, she seemed to have her mind entirely preoccupied with the occasion of her visit, and to have substituted that consideration for herself'

The quiet victory of disinterested goodness is wholly convincing.

At the opening of the book Sissie establishes the essential distinction between Gradgrind and Bounderby. Gradgrind, by

taking her home, however ungraciously, shows himself capable of humane feeling, however unacknowledged. We are reminded, in the previous school-room scene, of the Jonsonian affinities of Dickens's art, and Bounderby turns out to be consistently a Jonsonian character in the sense that he is incapable of change. He remains the blustering egotist and braggart, and responds in character to the collapse of his marriage.

"I'll give you to understand, in reply to that, that there unquestionably is an incompatibility of the first magnitude—to be summed up in this—that your daughter don't properly know her husband's merits, and is not impressed with such a sense as would become her, by George! of the honour of his alliance. That's plain speaking, I hope"

He remains Jonsonianly consistent in his last testament and death. But Gradgrind, in the nature of the fable, has to *experience* the confutation of his philosophy, and to be capable of the change involved in admitting that life has proved him wrong. (Dickens's art in *Hard Times* differs from Ben Jonson's not in being inconsistent, but in being so very much more flexible and inclusive—a point that seemed to be worth making because the relation between Dickens and Jonson has been stressed of late, and I have known unfair conclusions to be drawn from the comparison, notably in respect of *Hard Times*.)

The confutation of Utilitarianism by life is conducted with great subtlety. That the conditions for it are there in Mr. Gradgrind he betrays by his initial kindness, ungenial enough, but properly rebuked by Bounderby, to Sissie. 'Mr. Gradgrind', we are told, 'though hard enough, was by no means so rough a man as Mr. Bounderby. His character was not unkind, all things considered, it might have been very kind indeed if only he had made some mistake in the arithmetic that balanced it years ago'. The inadequacy of the calculus is beautifully exposed when he brings it to bear on the problem of marriage in the consummate scene with his eldest daughter.

'He waited, as if he would have been glad that she said something. But she said never a word.'

"Louisa, my dear, you are the subject of a proposal of marriage that has been made to me."

Again he waited, and again she answered not one word. This so far surprised him as to induce him gently to repeat, "A proposal of marriage, my dear." To which she returned, without any visible emotion whatever.

"I hear you, father. I am attending, I assure you."

"Well!" said Mr. Gradgrind, breaking into a smile, after being for the moment at a loss, "you are even more dispassionate than I expected, Louisa. Or, perhaps, you are not unprepared for the announcement I have it in charge to make?"

"I cannot say that, father, until I hear it. Prepared or unprepared, I wish to hear it all from you. I wish to hear you

state it to me, father''

Strange to relate, Mr Gradgrind was not so collected at this moment as his daughter was. He took a paper knife in his hand, turned it over, laid it down, took it up again, and even then had to look along the blade of it, considering how to go on.

"What you say, my dear Louisa, is perfectly reasonable. I have undertaken, then, to let you know that—in short, that Mr Bounderby

His embarrassment—by his own avowal—is caused by the perfect rationality with which she receives his overture. He is still more disconcerted when, with a completely dispassionate matter-of-factness that does credit to his régime, she gives him the opportunity to state in plain terms precisely what marriage should mean for the young Hounhnhnm.

'Silence between them. The deadly statistical clock very hollow. The distant smoke very black and heavy.'

"Father", said Louisa, "do you think I love Mr Bounderby?"

Mr Gradgrind was extremely discomfited by this unexpected question. "Well, my child", he returned, "I—really—cannot take upon myself to say."

"Father", pursued Louisa in exactly the same voice as before, "do you ask me to love Mr Bounderby?"

"My dear Louisa, no. I ask nothing."

"Father", she still pursued, "does Mr Bounderby ask me to love him?"

"Really, my dear", said Mr Gradgrind, "it is difficult to answer your question—"

"Difficult to answer it, Yes or No, father?"

"Certainly, my dear. Because"—here was something to demonstrate, and it set him up again—"because the reply depends so materially, Louisa, on the sense in which we use the expression. Now, Mr Bounderby does not do you the injustice, and does not do himself the injustice, of pretending to anything fanciful, fantastic, or (I am using synonymous terms) sentimental. Mr Bounderby would have seen you grow up under his eyes to very little purpose, if he could so far forget what is due to your good sense, not to say to his, as to address you from any such ground. Therefore, perhaps, the expression itself—I merely suggest this to you, my dear—may be a little misplaced."

"What would you advise me to use in its stead, father?"

"Why, my dear Louisa", said Mr Gradgrind, completely recovered by this time, "I would advise you (since you ask me) to consider this question, as you have been accustomed to consider every other question, simply as one of tangible Fact. The ignorant and the giddy may embarrass such subjects with irrelevant fancies, and other absurdities that have no existence, properly viewed—really no existence—but it is no compliment to you to say that you know better. Now, what are the Facts

of this case? You are, we will say in round numbers, twenty years of age, Mr Bounderby is, we will say in round numbers, fifty There is some disparity in your respective years, but

—And at this point Mr Gradgrind seizes the chance for a happy escape into statistics But Louisa brings him firmly back

"What do you recommend, father?", asked Louisa, her reserved composure not in the least affected by these gratifying results, "that I should substitute for the term I used just now? For the misplaced expression?"

"Louisa", returned her father, "it appears to me that nothing can be plainer Confining yourself rigidly to Fact, the question of Fact you state to yourself is Does Mr Bounderby ask me to marry him? Yes, he does The sole remaining question then is Shall I marry him? I think nothing can be plainer than that"

"Shall I marry him?" repeated Louisa with great deliberation

"Precisely"

It is a triumph of ironic art No logical analysis could dispose of the philosophy of fact and calculus with such neat finality As the issues are reduced to algebraic formulation they are patently emptied of all real meaning The instinct-free rationality of the emotionless Houynhnhnm is a void Louisa proceeds to try and make him understand that she is a living creature and therefore no Houynhnhnm, but in vain ('to see it, he must have overleaped at a bound the artificial barriers he had for many years been erecting between himself and all those subtle essences of humanity which will elude the utmost cunning of algebra, until the last trumpet ever to be sounded will blow even algebra to wreck')

'Removing her eyes from him, she sat so long looking silently towards the town, that he said at length "Are you consulting the chimneys of the Coketown works, Louisa?"

"There seems to be nothing there but languid and monotonous smoke Yet, when the night comes, Fire bursts out, father!" she answered, turning quickly

"Of course I know that, Louisa I do not see the application of the remark" To do him justice, he did not at all

She passed it away with a slight motion of her hand, and concentrating her attention upon him again, said, "Father, I have often thought that life is very short"—This was so distinctly one of his subjects that he interposed

"It is short, no doubt, my dear Still, the average duration of human life is proved to have increased of late years The calculations of various life assurance and annuity offices, among other figures which cannot go wrong, have established the fact"

"I speak of my own life, father"

"Oh indeed! Still", said Mr Gradgrind, "I need not point out to you, Louisa, that it is governed by the laws which govern lives in the aggregate"

"While it lasts, I would wish to do the little I can, and the little I am fit for. What does it matter?"

Mr Gradgrind seemed rather at a loss to understand the last four words, replying, "How, matter? What matter, my dear?"

"Mr Bounderby", she went on in a steady, straight way, without regarding this, "asks me to marry him. The question I have to ask myself is, shall I marry him? That is so, father, is it not? You have told me so, father. Have you not?"

"Certainly, my dear"

"Let it be so"

The psychology of Louisa's development and of her brother Tom's is sound. Having no outlet for her emotional life except in her love for her brother, she lives for him, and marries Bounderby—under pressure from Tom—for Tom's sake ('What does it matter?'). Thus, by the constrictions and starvations of the Gradgrind régime are natural affection and capacity for disinterested devotion turned to ill. As for Tom, the régime has made of him a bored and sullen whelp, and 'he was becoming that not unprecedented triumph of calculation which is usually at work on number one'—the Utilitarian philosophy has done that for him. He declares that when he goes to live with Bounderby as having a post in the bank, 'he'll have his revenge'—'I mean, I'll enjoy myself a little, and go about and see something and hear something. I'll recompense myself for the way in which I've been brought up'. His descent into debt and bank-robbery is natural. And it is natural that Louisa, having sacrificed herself for this unrepaying object of affection, should be found not altogether unresponsive when Mr James Harthouse, having sized up the situation, pursues his opportunity with well-bred and calculating tact. His apologia for genteel cynicism is a shrewd thrust at the Gradgrind philosophy.

"The only difference between us and the professors of virtue or benevolence, or philanthropy—never mind the name—is, that we know it is all meaningless, and say so, while they know it equally, and will never say so"

Why should she be shocked or warned by this reiteration?

It was not so unlike her father's principles, and her early training, that it need startle her.

When, fleeing from temptation, she arrives back at her father's house, tells him her plight, and, crying, "All I know is, your philosophy and your teaching will not save me", collapses, he sees 'the pride of his heart and the triumph of his system lying an insensible heap at his feet'. The fallacy now calamitously demonstrated can be seen focussed in that 'pride', which brings together in illusory oneness the pride of his system and his love for his child. What that love is Gradgrind now knows, and he knows that it matters to him more than the system, which is thus confuted (the educational failure as such being a lesser matter). There is

nothing sentimental here, the demonstration is impressive, because we are convinced of the love, and because Gradgrind has been made to exist for us as a man who has 'meant to do right'

'He said it earnestly, and, to do him justice, he had In gauging fathomless deeps with his little mean excise rod, and in staggering over the universe with his rusty stiff-legged compasses, he had meant to do great things Within the limits of his short tether he had tumbled about, annihilating the flowers of existence with greater singleness of purpose than many of the blatant personages whose company he kept'

The demonstration still to come, that of which the other 'triumph of his system', Tom, is the centre, is sardonic comedy, imagined with great intensity and done with the sure touch of genius There is the pregnant scene in which Mr Gradgrind, in the deserted ring of a third-rate travelling circus, has to recognize his son in a comic negro servant, and has to recognize that his son owes his escape from justice to a peculiarly disinterested gratitude—to the opportunity given him to assume such a disguise by the non-Utilitarian Mr Sleary, grateful for Sissie's sake

'In a preposterous coat, like a beadle's, with cuffs and flaps exaggerated to an unspeakable extent, in an immense waistcoat, knee breeches, buckled shoes, and a mad cocked-hat, with nothing fitting him, and everything of coarse material, moth-eaten, and full of holes, with seams in his black face, where fear and heat had started through the greasy composition daubed all over it, anything so grimly, detestably, ridiculously shameful as the whelp in his comic livery, Mr Gradgrind never could by any other means have believed in, weighable and measurable fact though it was And one of his model children had come to this'

At first the whelp would not draw any nearer but persisted in remaining up there by himself Yielding at length, if any concession so sullenly made can be called yielding, to the entreaties of Sissy—for Louisa he disowned altogether—he came down, bench by bench, until he stood in the sawdust, on the verge of the circle, as far as possible, within its limits, from where his father sat

"How was this done?" asked the father

"How was what done?" moodily answered the son

"Thus robbery", said the father, raising his voice upon the word

"I forced the safe myself overnight, and shut it up ajar before I went away I had had the key that was found, made long before I dropped it that morning, that it might be supposed to have been used I didn't take the money all at once I pretended to put my balance away every night, but I didn't Now you know all about it"

"If a thunderbolt had fallen on me", said the father, "it would have shocked me less than this!"

"I don't see why", grumbled the son "So many people are employed in situations of trust, so many people, out of so many, will be dishonest I have heard you talk, a hundred times, of its being a law How can I help laws? You have comforted others with such things, father Comfort yourself!"

The father buried his face in his hands, and the son stood in his disgraceful grotesqueness, biting straw his hands, with the black partly worn away inside, looking like the hands of a monkey The evening was fast closing in, and, from time to time, he turned the whites of his eyes restlessly and impatiently towards his father They were the only parts of his face that showed any life or expression, the pigment upon it was so thick

Something of the rich complexity of Dickens's art may be seen in this passage No simple formula can take account of the various elements in the whole effect, a sardonic-tragic in which satire consorts with pathos The excerpt in itself suggests the justification for saying that *Hard Times* is a poetic work It suggests further that the genius of the writer may fairly be described as that of a poetic dramatist, and that, in our preconceptions about 'the novel', we may miss, within the field of fictional prose, possibilities of concentration and flexibility in the interpretation of life such as we associate with Shakespearian drama

The note, as we have it above in Tom's retort, of ironic-satiric discomfiture of the Utilitarian philosopher by the rebound of his formulæ upon himself is developed in the ensuing scene with Bitzer, the truly successful pupil, the real triumph of the system He arrives to intercept Tom's flight

'Bitzer, still holding the paralysed culprit by the collar, stood in the Ring, blinking at his old patron through the darkness of the twilight

"Bitzer", said Mr Gradgrind, broken down, and miserably submissive to him, "have you a heart?"

"The circulation, sir", returned Bitzer, smiling at the oddity of the question, "couldn't be carried on without one No man, sir, acquainted with the facts established by Harvey relating to the circulation of the blood, can doubt that I have a heart"

"Is it accessible", cried Mr Gradgrind, "to any compassionate influence?"

"It is accessible to Reason, sir", returned the excellent young man "And to nothing else"

They stood looking at each other, Mr Gradgrind's face as white as the pursuer's

"What motive—even what motive in reason—can you have for preventing the escape of this wretched youth", said Mr Gradgrind, "and crushing his miserable father? See his sister here Pity us!"

"Sir", returned Bitzer in a very business-like and logical manner, "since you ask me what motive I have in reason for taking young Mr Tom back to Coketown, it is only reasonable

to let you know. I am going to take young Mr Tom back to Coketown, in order to deliver him over to Mr Bounderby. Sir, I have no doubt whatever that Mr Bounderby will then promote me to young Mr Tom's situation. And I wish to have his situation, sir, for it will be a rise to me, and will do me good."

"If this is solely a question of self-interest with you—" Mr Gradgrind began.

"I beg your pardon for interrupting you, sir", returned Bitzer, "but I am sure you know that the whole social system is a question of self-interest. What you must always appeal to is a person's self-interest. It's your only hold. We are so constituted. I was brought up in that catechism when I was very young, sir, as you are aware."

"What sum of money", said Mr Gradgrind, "will you set against your expected promotion?"

"Thank you, sir", returned Bitzer, "for hinting at the proposal, but I will not set any sum against it. Knowing that your clear head would propose that alternative, I have gone over the calculations in my mind, and I find that to compound a felony, even on very high terms indeed, would not be as safe and good for me as my improved prospects in the Bank."

"Bitzer", said Mr Gradgrind, stretching out his hands as though he would have said, See how miserable I am! "Bitzer, I have but one chance left to soften you. You were many years at my school. If, in remembrance of the pains bestowed upon you there, you can persuade yourself in any degree to disregard your present interest and release my son, I entreat and pray you to give him the benefit of that remembrance."

"I really wonder, sir", rejoined the old pupil in an argumentative manner, "to find you taking a position so untenable. My schooling was paid for, it was a bargain, and when I came away, the bargain ended."

It was a fundamental principle of the Gradgrind philosophy, that everything was to be paid for. Nobody was ever on any account to give anybody anything, or render anybody help without purchase. Gratitude was to be abolished, and the virtues springing from it were not to be. Every inch of the existence of mankind, from birth to death, was to be a bargain across the counter. And if we didn't get to Heaven that way, it was not a politico-economical place, and we had no business there.

"I don't deny", added Bitzer, "that my schooling was cheap. But that comes right, sir. I was made in the cheapest market, and have to dispose of myself in the dearest."

Tom's escape is contrived, successfully in every sense, by means belonging to Dickensian high-fantastic comedy. And there follows the solemn moral of the whole fable, put with the rightness of genius into Mr Sleary's asthmatic mouth. He, agent of the artist's marvellous tact, acquits himself of it characteristically.

"Thquire, you don't need to be told that dogth ith

wonderful animalth''

"Their instinct", said Mr Gradgrind, "is surprising"

"Whatever you call it—and I'm bletht if I know what to call it"—said Sleary, "it ith athonithing The way in which a dog'll find you—the dithtanthe he'll come!"

"His scent", said Mr Gradgrind, "being so fine"

"I'm bletht if I know what to call it", repeated Sleary, shaking his head, "but I have had dogth find me, Thquire"

—And Mr Sleary proceeds to explain that Sissie's truant father is certainly dead because his performing dog, who would never have deserted him living, has come back to the Horse-riding

"he wath lame, and pretty well blind. He went round to our children, one after another, ath if he wath a theeking for a child he knowed, and then he come to me, and throwed hithelf up behind, and thtood on his two fore-legth, weak as he wath, and then he wagged hith tail and died Thquire, that dog was Merrylegth"

The whole passage has to be read as it stands in the text (Book III, c VIII) Reading it there we have to stand off and reflect at a distance to recognize the potentialities that might have been realized elsewhere as Dickensian sentimentality There is nothing sentimental in the actual effect The profoundly serious intention is in control, the touch sure, and the structure that ensures the poise unassertively complex Here is the formal moral

"Tho, whether her father bathely detherted her, or whether he broke hith own heart alone, rather than pull her down along with him, never will be known now, Thquire, till—no, not till we know how the dogth findth uth out!"

"She keeps the bottle that he sent her for, to this hour, and she will believe in his affection to the last moment of her life", said Mr Gradgrind

"It theemth to prethent two thingth to a perthon, don't it, Thquire?" said Mr Sleary, musing as he looked down into the depths of his brandy-and-water "one, that there ith a love in the world, not all Thelf-interetht after all, but thomething very different, t'other, that it hath a way of ith own of calculating or not calculatng, whith thomehow or another ith at leathth ath hard to give a name to, ath the wayth of the dogth ith!"

Mr Gradgrind looked out of the window, and made no reply Mr Sleary emptied his glass and recalled the ladies'

It will be seen that the effect (I repeat, the whole passage must be read), apparently so simple and easily right, depends upon a subtle interplay of diverse elements, a multiplicity in unison of timbre and tone Dickens, we know, was a popular entertainer, but Flaubert never wrote anything approaching this in subtlety of achieved art Dickens, of course, has a vitality that we don't look for in Flaubert Shakespeare was a popular entertainer we

reflect—not too extravagantly, we can surely tell ourselves, as we ponder passages of this characteristic quality in their relation, a closely organized one, to the poetic whole

Criticism, of course, has its points to make against *Hard Times*. It can be said of Stephen Blackpool, not only that he is too good and qualifies too consistently for the martyr's halo, but that he invites an adaptation of the objection brought, from the negro point of view, against Uncle Tom, which was to the effect that he was a white man's good nigger. And certainly it doesn't need a working-class bias to produce the comment that when Dickens comes to the Trade Unions his understanding of the world he offers to deal with betrays a marked limitation. There were undoubtedly professional agitators, and Trade Union solidarity was undoubtedly often asserted at the expense of the individual's rights, but it is a score against a work so insistently typical in intention that it should give the representative rôle to the agitator, Slackbridge, and make Trade Unionism nothing better than the pardonable error of the misguided and oppressed, and, as such, an agent in the martyrdom of the good workingman. (But to be fair we must remember the conversation between Bitzer and Mrs. Sparsit

"It is much to be regretted", said Mrs. Sparsit, making her nose more Roman and her eyebrows more Cornelian in the strength of her severity, "that the united masters allow of any such class combination"

"Yes, ma'am", said Bitzer

"Being united themselves, they ought one and all to set their faces against employing any man who is united with any other man" said Mrs. Sparsit

"They have done that, ma'am", returned Bitzer, "but it rather fell through, ma'am"

"I do not pretend to understand these things", said Mrs. Sparsit with dignity. "I only know that those people must be conquered, and that it's high time it was done, once for all")

Just as Dickens has no glimpse of the part to be played by Trade Unionism in bettering the conditions he deplures, so, though he sees there are many places of worship in Coketown, of various kinds of ugliness, he has no notion of the part played by religion in the life of nineteenth-century industrial England. The kind of self-respecting steadiness and conscientious restraint that he represents in Stephen did certainly exist on a large scale among the working-classes, and this is an important historical fact. But there would have been no such fact if those chapels described by Dickens had had no more relation to the life of Coketown than he shows them to have

Again, his attitude to Trade Unionism is not the only expression of a lack of political understanding. Parliament for him is merely the 'national dust-yard', where the 'national dustmen' entertain one another 'with a great many noisy little fights among themselves', and appoint commissions which fill blue-books with

dreary facts and futile statistics—of a kind that helps Gradgrind to 'prove that the Good Samaritan was a bad economist'

Yet Dickens's understanding of Victorian civilization is adequate for his purpose, the justice and penetration of his criticism are unaffected. And his moral perception works in alliance with a clear insight into the English social structure. Mr James Harthouse is necessary for the plot, but he too has his representative function. He has come to Coketown as a prospective parliamentary candidate, for 'the Gradgrind party wanted assistance in cutting the throats of the Graces', and they 'liked fine gentlemen, they pretended that they did not, but they did'. And so the alliance between the old ruling class and the 'hard' men figures duly in the fable. This economy is typical. There is Mrs Sparsit, for instance, who might seem to be there merely for the plot. But her 'husband was a Powler', a fact she reverts to as often as Bounderby to his mythical birth in a ditch, and the two complimentary opposites, when Mr James Harthouse, who in his languid assurance of class-superiority doesn't need to boast, is added, form a trio that suggests the whole system of British snobbery.

But the packed richness of *Hard Times* is almost incredibly varied, and not all the quoting I have indulged in suggests it adequately. The final stress may fall on Dickens's command of word, phrase, rhythm and image: in ease and range there is surely no greater master of English except Shakespeare. This comes back to saying that Dickens is a great poet: his endless resource in felicitously varied expression is an extraordinary responsiveness to life. His senses are charged with emotional energy, and his intelligence plays and flashes in the quickest and sharpest perception. That is, his mastery of 'style' is of the only kind that matters—which is not to say that he hasn't a conscious interest in what can be done with words (consider that 'Coriolanian' above), many of his felicities could plainly not have come if there had not been, in the background, a habit of such interest. Take this, for instance:

'He had reached the neutral ground upon the outskirts of the town, which was neither town nor country, but either spoiled

But he is no more a stylist than Shakespeare, and his mastery of expression is most fairly suggested by stressing, not his descriptive evocations (there are some magnificent ones in *Hard Times*—the varied *décor* of the action is made vividly present, you can feel the velvety dust trodden by Mrs Sparsit in her stealth, and feel the imminent storm), but his strictly dramatic felicities. Perhaps, however, 'strictly' is not altogether a good pointer, since Dickens is a master of his chosen art, and his mastery shows itself in the way in which he moves between less direct forms of the dramatic and the direct rendering of speech. Here is Mrs Gradgrind dying (a cipher in the Gradgrind system, the poor creature has never really been alive)

'She had positively refused to take to her bed, on the ground that, if she did, she would never hear the last of it

Her feeble voice sounded so far away in her bundle of shawls, and the sound of another voice addressing her seemed to take such a long time in getting down to her ears, that she might have been lying at the bottom of a well. The poor lady was nearer Truth than she ever had been which had much to do with it

On being told that Mrs. Bounderby was there, she replied, at cross purposes, that she had never called him by that name since he had married Louisa, and that pending her choice of an objectionable name, she had called him J, and that she could not at present depart from that regulation, not being yet provided with a permanent substitute. Louisa had sat by her for some minutes, and had spoken to her often, before she arrived at a clear understanding who it was. She then seemed to come to it all at once

"Well, my dear", said Mrs. Gradgrind, "and I hope you are going on satisfactorily to yourself. It was all your father's doing. He set his heart upon it. And he ought to know"

"I want to hear of you, mother, not of myself"

"You want to hear of me, my dear? That's something new, I am sure, when anybody wants to hear of me. Not at all well, Louisa. Very faint and giddy"

"Are you in pain, dear mother?"

"I think there's a pain somewhere in the room", said Mrs. Gradgrind, "but I couldn't positively say that I have got it"

After this strange speech, she lay silent for some time

"But there is something—not an Ology at all—that your father has missed, or forgotten, Louisa. I don't know what it is. I have often sat with Sissy near me, and thought about it. I shall never get its name now. But your father may. It makes me restless. I want to write to him, to find out, for God's sake, what it is. Give me a pen, give me a pen"

Even the power of restlessness was gone, except from the poor head, which could just turn from side to side

She fancied, however, that her request had been complied with, and that the pen she could not have held was in her hand. It matters little what figures of wonderful no-meaning she began to trace upon her wrappers. The hand soon stopped in the midst of them, the light that had always been feeble and dim behind the weak transparency, went out, and even Mrs. Gradgrind, emerged from the shadow in which man walketh and disquieteth himself in vain, took upon her the dread solemnity of the sages and patriarchs'

With this kind of thing before us, we talk not of style but of dramatic creation and imaginative genius

F R LEAVIS

PROFESSOR CHADWICK AND ENGLISH STUDIES

[The reference in our last number to Professor H M Chadwick's contribution to English Studies at Cambridge went to Press just before his death. We are glad therefore to be able to print the following communication from one of his former pupils—Ed.]

IT is a pity Chadwick did not live to read the acknowledgment to his work by the younger generation in the last number of *Scrutiny*, and I am tempted by the inadequacy of the obituary notices I've seen to try and put on record, in more detail, just what he did do for English studies, and how his work and personality affected his pupils. Particularly as a lot of nonsense has been put about suggesting that he *harmed* Anglo-Saxon studies by his peculiar views.

I see he started his career as a double-First Classic—what a native endowment he must have had to survive that plaster-of-Paris régime! But the first thing about him one noticed was how un-academic he was, the refreshing absence of that aura of anecdotes, social values and lack of real interest which is so discouraging to the young. His kindly eyes looked at once innocent and shrewd, he retained his Yorkshire accent, and always wore a Norfolk jacket and bicycling breeches costume. When I came up he was one of the very few educational influences a student of English was likely to encounter. It was before the two all-literature English Triposes were invented, and you took one comprehensive Eng Lit tripos ('English A') and some other tripos, if you liked, the section of the Archæology and Anthropology Tripos created by Chadwick, then called 'English B'.

Its conception and the way it was carried out were characteristic of the man. You can read his own account in his invaluable little book, *The Study of Anglo-Saxon* (Heffer, 1941). It's full of good things, written with the disinterestedness, good sense and intelligent insight he brought to bear on all subjects, but it's particularly the last chapter, 'The Future of Anglo-Saxon Studies', which is important for the English student. Here you can see why he so annoyed orthodox academics, starting from observation and his experience as a teacher, he explains with shocking candour that, since few students have any gift for philology, compulsory philology and history-of-language courses are 'futile'. This came with peculiar force from the man who had started his academic career as a classical philologist. He goes on to argue that philology is 'a great hindrance to Anglo-Saxon studies'.

'The subject appeals to a very small proportion of the students, according to my experience. They should have the opportunity of taking it, at least as a subject for post-graduate study—for which it is best suited. But it is unreasonable to force it upon every student. It is no more necessary for the study of Anglo-Saxon than it is for that of Latin or Greek or a modern foreign language. The connection with (later) English studies has led to a very great increase in the number of people who have at least some knowledge of Anglo-Saxon. English literature is now one of the most popular subjects in our Universities, and in most of them Anglo-Saxon is, or has been, a more or less compulsory element in the course. As to the value of this connection for either subject, my own experience has been that, when Anglo-Saxon is compulsory, it is disliked, and the students gain little or nothing from it. On the other hand, when it is optional, the number who take it is very small—not more than one in ten—but these usually rather like it, if philology is eliminated, and most of them gain thereby. To force it upon a larger number of students is, in my experience, a mere waste of time for both student and teacher. Most of the students regard it as a nuisance.'

Worse, he goes on to argue 'in the interests of Anglo-Saxon studies' that

'There are serious objections, however, to any scheme which involves an exclusive or even primary connection of Anglo-Saxon with English studies. The latter do not afford a good training for the former, and in Universities where this connection has ceased it is found that the majority of our best students come from other subjects than English. For Anglo-Saxon studies some inclination for the acquisition of languages and a wider historical outlook are desirable, English studies are too limited in their scope. Indeed, the two subjects appeal to different kinds of mind.'

It is all too true, in fact indisputable, but how unprofessional to admit, even to notice, anything of the sort, in what bad taste to announce it from the house-tops! Compulsory Anglo-Saxon, philology and history-of-language courses attached to the popular English Literature degree-studies make jobs for specialists, provide subjects that can be *taught*, lectured and examined on mechanically (no nonsense about education, but just that 'factual matter' which somehow provides 'discipline')—surely that is all the justification needed. But Chadwick was perverse enough to uphold the interests not of professionals but of Anglo-Saxon studies—of which he, after all, held the Chair. He insisted that Anglo-Saxon should be studied in his university in its proper context, in association with the early history and antiquities of the country and in comparison with early Scandinavian studies similarly organized—that is, he made it a study of early civilizations. He wanted to do for our own early culture something comparable to what the Classical Tripos does for

the early history of Greece and Rome, to provide a unified study which should be truly educational. 'The number of students who will take such a course as this', he writes, 'will doubtless be small—at least until the importance of our early history is more generally recognized. At present the only way of getting a large number of students to learn Anglo-Saxon is by making it a more or less compulsory subject in a popular course—e.g., by making it impossible to obtain a degree in English without it. I have had experience of both systems, and have no hesitation in expressing my preference for the one which will secure a few keen students, who choose the course of their own free will, and will in all probability derive real benefit from it.'

Well, a lot of 'English' students did opt for Chadwick's scheme nevertheless, and, as he says, got real benefit from it. His trips opened for us the doors into archæology, anthropology, sociology, pre-history, early architecture—all beginnings for future self-education, and he saw to it that these subjects, studied with reference to Scandinavia and England, should also extend to the Celtic and Mediterranean areas, opening fresh vistas. The interest and profit were inexhaustible. We didn't, under him and his colleagues, go through the philological grind ('an exercise of memory and faith' as he contemptuously describes it) and we didn't 'get up' Anglo-Saxon as a meaningless adjunct to mediaeval and modern English literature. Nor did we have to study *Beowulf* under the hypocritical pretence that it is great poetry, we used it as an interesting document. Anglo-Saxon literature, studied in connection with Old Norse literature in particular and other early literatures in general, gave us an insight into the origins of literature (his own 3-vol. work on this subject, *The Growth of Literature*, shows the breadth of his base). And this was only part of the larger scheme, in which the early literatures of Northern Europe and Great Britain were studied, not snatched out of their context as literatures nearly always are, but as part of their inseparable background, the cultures that produced them. This meant that anyone working under Chadwick had to study the history, archæology, literature, arts, social life and so forth of Northern Europe from the Beaker period to the Norman Conquest, in fact, Northern Europe from the end of the Stone Age to the end of the Dark Ages was conceived and treated as a continuous cultural study. Of course this was a lot even for two years, but it was assumed that the student had special aptitudes. Most students grumbled and groaned when they were launched on two new languages at once, plus a terrifying syllabus which included the entire literatures of Anglo-Saxon and Old Norse, but all retracted later, for Chadwick's method made one take the merely memory work in one's stride—it was not going to be examined on for its own sake—and he was a remarkable teacher as well as a great scholar, the true original mind that can organize knowledge. He got together a good team too, which included Dame Bertha Philpotts, the authority on the Viking Age. Many look back on the

two years they spent with him as the most valuable and formative period of their intellectual life. The effect of such a boldly conceived course of study was evident in the rapid maturing of the students. His system was the opposite of the spoon-feeding method that the modern universities adopt towards their students.

He and his tripos were wonderfully stimulating. There were drawbacks, of course. He was himself a linguistic genius, and as his students used to complain, he apparently thought that everyone is born with a knowledge of runes, Celtic languages and Old High German, but when his attention was drawn to this misunderstanding, he was always very patient and considerate. He was not a theoretical educationist but he could see what is educational and what is not. Nor was he a writer on his special studies who could give them a wide appeal, like W. P. Ker. He was simply a teacher and scholar who had hatched an educational idea and felt its value enough to be stubborn about preserving it. Obviously a strain of the publicist in his composition would have helped to promote his ends, and would have made him able to place his discovery and his methods before the educational world in a more persuasive light. He was too single-minded to be able or willing to grapple with academic politics. He complains, 'An unfortunate feature of University life to-day is that the time and energy which should go to teaching and research has to be spent in committee rooms'. But it is the academic with no vocation for teaching—with nothing to teach—who enjoys the power that can be exercised in committee rooms.

To sum up his achievement. He provided a course of study in itself highly educational. He showed how literary and linguistic studies could be made most profitable, by successfully correlating them with their social background—a very different matter from the scrappy 'Life and Thought' courses which are the inadequate gestures the English Tripos makes in a half-hearted effort to provide a similar organization for mediaeval and modern literature. (Just as his system of comparative study of early literature differs from the oddments of Italian and French set-book that the English Faculty Board piously hopes, one supposes, will do the trick for English literature). After taking Chadwick's 'English B', those who proceeded to 'English A' realized what an opportunity was lost in the handling—or rather, lack of handling—of Mediaeval Literature and 'Life and Thought', even though the English School enjoyed the services of Dr. Coulton. Moreover, Chadwick certainly showed how literary studies could be linked up with that school of sociological studies which Cambridge so notoriously lacks. In addition, he of course very considerably furthered Anglo-Saxon studies by getting texts edited and books written, by his pupils and friends as well as himself, and by getting them considered in the larger and more fruitful light he brought to bear on them.

But the professor of Anglo-Saxon who had given evidence before a Board of Education committee that 'It cannot be too clearly recognized that compulsory philology is the natural and

mortal enemy of humanistic studies' and that the literary interest of Anglo-Saxon is 'not so great as to repay students of modern literature for the time they will have to spend in acquiring a sufficient mastery of the language to appreciate it'¹ had to pay the penalty for his disinterestedness. He had insisted on taking his subject seriously and his position as an educationist responsibly, instead of accepting both conventionally, and he was always aware of official opposition. It was true he already had, and so was secure in, the Chair. But an obscure movement, of which we shall never know the exact history, seemed to him to threaten his life-work all along, and it has taken on fresh vigour since his retirement in 1940. In his book on *The Study of Anglo-Saxon* he refers to 'authorities responsible for English' who 'wish to acquire control over Anglo-Saxon studies' and that such a scheme of his 'meets with much opposition. The teaching staff may be unanimous in its favour, and the students may be well satisfied and keen, but opposition or interference may come from persons or committees who have no knowledge of Anglo-Saxon studies, but who may think that their own interests may be affected in some way by such a scheme'. Presumably some not very creditable episode of academic history led Chadwick twenty years ago to remove his studies and himself from the English Faculty to the school of Archaeology and Anthropology, which in the person of Dr A. C. Haddon received him with open arms. That great man and he were two of a kind. Haddon must have been a fertilizing influence for him as well as a congenial presence and an ally. One knew what the academic 'English' attitude to Chadwick's scheme was, from the tone in which it was mentioned—resentment. The desire to undo Chadwick's work is one sign of that hatred of life which academic history illustrates in so many ways. For Chadwick was a rare instance of what is supposed to be typical academic disinterestedness but what the academic milieu is instinctively hostile to. No doubt, under the plea of 'getting Anglo-Saxon back into the English Tripos', his work on the other side, as to which he was equally firm, that of freeing English students from compulsory linguistic and philological cram, will be undone, and, in his own words, 'the herding of masses of students along familiar lines, some of which are barren and useless enough' will be resumed some day—in whose interest? Not the students', assuredly, as Chadwick has shown, at any rate.

¹*The Teaching of English in England*, H. M. Stationery Office, 1921

CORRESPONDENCE

DEAR SIR,

I have a high respect for *Scrutiny's* reviews, the one on Aragon, for example, was admirable as a corrective to recent uncritical adulation. I would however like to question the estimate of Apollinaire by G. D. Klingopulos in the last issue. I am sure your reviewer is right about Professor Bowra's preface and the biography by André Rouveyre, but you will agree that a poet should not be judged by the excesses of his friends. I have not read the complete works of Apollinaire, but one book of his, *Alcools*, I have had for fifteen years and have re-read at intervals. After Mr. Klingopulos, I went back to *Alcools* to see if after all I had been deluded as to their quality. But I seem to detect that in this case Apollinaire has been used as a whipping-horse for 'modish gallophils'.

Mr. Klingopulos compares certain images in Apollinaire with the 'patient etherized upon a table'. Eliot's image, on the first page of *Poems* 1909-1925, is curiously unlike any other in his work that I can recall. It has indeed few parallels but oddly enough there is one in *Alcools*, in a poem dated 1909 (*Poème Lu au Mariage d'André Salmon*)

Nous nous sommes rencontrés dans un caveau maudit
 Au temps de notre jeunesse
 Fumant tous deux et mal vêtus attendant l'aube
 Épris épris des mêmes paroles dont il faudra changer le sens
 Trompés trompés pauvres petits et ne sachant pas encore rire
 La table et les deux verres devinrent un mourant qui nous
 jeta le dernier regard d'Orphée

The last line has been quoted in France about as often as the 'patient etherized' in England. It dates from the same period and has had rather the same function. It seems to satisfy Mr. Klingopulos' requirements in a 'surprising image'.

I would not claim that Apollinaire is as substantial a poet as Eliot, but he is certainly on a par with such writers as Verhaeren and Laforgue, who directly influenced both Eliot and Pound. All were engaged in inventing a poetry consistent with modern urban life. This involved experiment both in style and content. When Apollinaire referred, e.g., to aeroplanes, he was still writing in the dawn of twentieth-century technology. The Futurist school had yet to appear, and the 'future' which it hailed had yet to unfold. The references to modernity in Apollinaire are not (in spite of Mr. Klingopulos) strictly comparable in tone with those of Stephen Spender to pylons. They have admittedly something in common with Walt Whitman, whose rugged and peculiar example had a big effect in France and of whom Pound himself admitted 'We have one sap and one root'. The Whitmanesque effusiveness was modified in transit, but the rhapsodic form, the strings of images,

are to be found in Apollinaire (and indeed in Eliot) with a more melancholy inflection and without Whitman's whole-hearted optimistic acceptance. Apollinaire is nearer to Whitman in being more cheerful than Eliot about the new phenomena. He can write about a street in Paris 'J'aime la grâce de cette rue industrielle' though when he wrote about London (in 1903) it sounds more like Eliot's 'vision of the street'

Au tournant d'une rue brûlant
De tous les feux de ses façades
Plaies du brouillard sanguinolent

Perhaps no poet of this century has yet come off unhurt in the struggle over style and content. In Eliot's case the imagery of the London street, so dominant in all his poetry up to and including 'The Waste Land', has latterly receded, leaving, to my mind, a singularly beautiful style unsupported by an adequate content. Apollinaire on his side has a diffuseness of style which makes it easy to quote weak passages. There are similar weaknesses even in Baudelaire, and even in his best poems—'Le Cygne' for example. It needed the efforts of Mallarmé in French, as of Pound in English, to eliminate stylistic weakness, and it was done at the price of over-condensation and an increasingly esoteric content. It has not so far been possible to combine in one poet the dual capacity for enlarged experience and verbal precision which would meet contemporary exigencies. Apollinaire made a contribution to the enlarging of the poetic 'lebensraum' which does not deserve to be dismissed as 'puerile', 'ingenuous' or 'commonplace'. I think, perhaps, that in Mr. Klingopulos' assessment it is his sense of period that is at fault. He should reserve his strictures for those who have failed to learn the lessons of Pound and Eliot, of Mallarmé and Valéry, rather than apply them to those who helped to break new ground.

Yours sincerely,

CHARLES MADGE

Our reviewer comments

Bad poetry has, of course, a period interest (*e.g.*, poésie de la résistance—Aragon). I'm glad Mr. Madge agrees with me about some things, though we should differ about the 'content' of Mr. Eliot's later poems. But his letter would have been even more interesting had he, equipped with a 'sense of period', offered another reading of my long quotations which included one complete poem, in relation to which, my adjectives 'puerile', 'lurid' and 'commonplace', have, I think, some meaning. As it is, his grounds for dismissing Professor Bowra's valuation are difficult to understand.

G D K

Another letter, criticizing *Scrutiny*, has been held over for lack of space.

COMMENTS AND REVIEWS

REHABILITATING IBSEN

IBSEN, THE INTELLECTUAL BACKGROUND, by Brian W
Downs (Cambridge University Press, 10/6)

IBSEN THE NORWEGIAN, A REVALUATION, by M C
Bradbrook (Chatto and Windus, 10/6)

There are signs of a general revival of interest in Ibsen. One hears rumours of a new translation on the way, and there seems to be a growing feeling that we need a more adequate critical account than that provided by Shaw and Archer, with their emphasis on social and moral problems, or even by Mr Janko Lavrin. The two books under review are very differently placed in relation to this movement of opinion, and their aims are as diverse as their methods.

For Mr Downs it is not a question of rehabilitating Ibsen. He shows no recognition—perhaps chooses to ignore the possibility—that anything of the kind may be needed. Assuming general agreement that Ibsen is ‘a very great author, one of the supreme dramatists of all time’, he makes it clear that he is offering neither literary criticism nor biography, but only a study of the historical, social and cultural background of the plays. The result is a piece of painstaking and solid scholarship which will be of interest mainly to those who share the initial assumption. These accounts of Ibsen’s literary education, his contacts with public life, his relation to Scandinavianism and Norwegian nationalism, the influence upon him of Kierkegaard, Bjornson and Brandes, and his attitude to the typical nineteenth-century problems of evolution, heredity, sex, feminism and the early psychology of the unconscious, may be of use to the critic who has made his own approach to the dramas as literature. Mr Downs says that Ibsen’s development is not fully comprehensible without a knowledge of his background, it may be so, but knowledge of this kind must subserve, and cannot replace, criticism. In itself it cannot help to answer the prior question why at this date Ibsen’s work is important to us at all. There is nothing in this book to help the unconverted who ask for some demonstration that Ibsen’s ideas have been successfully translated into art. Its interest lies therefore within very narrow limits and its conscientious thoroughness is not helped by a rather dull and heavy style.

Even a study so exclusively concerned with background, however, is liable on the one hand to betray critical preconceptions, and on the other to suggest critical observations. The implied

critical attitude of Mr Downs seems to be not so very different from that of Archer and Shaw that is, he stresses the 'problem' aspect of the plays from *A Doll's House* onwards, and seems to think that Ibsen embraced wholeheartedly Brandes' theory that literature should 'submit problems to debate' He seems, indeed, to draw no special distinction between the four last plays and their immediate predecessors Whether or not we agree with this attitude, it is not quite the line on which the latest defences of Ibsen are conducted Miss Bradbrook's approach, as we shall see, is rather different As for the criticisms implied incidentally, examples may be found in the observation that the plays show a pathological abhorrence of physical passion, and, more significantly, in the reference to 'his skill for putting the full onus of interpretation on the reader' (the ending of *Peer Gynt* is under discussion) which might suggest a radical ambiguity here and perhaps in other works¹

Miss Bradbrook's book is explicitly a revaluation, and she is out to convert those to whom the arguments of the older Ibsenites make no appeal She too is concerned to put Ibsen back into his setting of Norwegian culture and history, but since her approach is that of the literary critic she bases her main argument on his actual use of language, in prose and verse alike

'For Ibsen's prose is dramatic, which means that in balance, movement and rhythm it is adapted for speaking and it is literature, which means that it is built upon the natural virtues of the tongue and upon Ibsen's personal idiom as he fashioned it to his needs His writing can be understood only in terms of the Norse, with its clear, pungent but concrete vocabulary, its strong live metaphors its lack of reverberation or overtones His translators were not concerned with the poetic use of language or with those sides of Ibsen's genius which were rooted in his race his humour, which was exuberant and ironical, his lyricism, his melancholy and his piety Swift, Burns and Emily Brontë shaken up together in a bag might produce something resembling Ibsen The dehydrated Ibsen who is known through the translations has little in common with any of the three'

When the claim is presented in this way it is difficult for anyone whose knowledge of Ibsen depends on Archerese—'the translator's equivalent of Basic English'—to comment without embarrassment But since this book is presumably intended for readers who have no Norse, and sets out to persuade them of Ibsen's greatness, it may be permissible for one of them to attempt to say how far the argument carries conviction

¹Mr Downs thinks that any 'salvation of *Peer* by Solveig' (an interpretation which he admits cannot be ruled out) goes far to stultify the rest of the play Miss Bradbrook seems to accept it Shaw thought *Brand* a simple satire on idealism Croce complains that we are left in doubt.

An objection must be made first to what seems an illegitimate method of persuasion—a tendency to compare Ibsen on almost every page with the greatest names in literature. Even when there is a particular point to be made in the comparison one feels that it has the secondary effect of building up a feeling of special respect for Ibsen in the reader's mind, and sometimes that seems to be its main function—rather like reiterated imagery in an Elizabethan play. A few examples will illustrate this tendency.

'These plays correspond in Ibsen's career to that period when Shakespeare was shaping his art in the chronicles'

'Ibsen and Tolstoy were incomparably the greatest literary figures of their time'

'[Peer Gynt] lies upon the earth as naked and despairing as Timon of Athens'

'The unrelenting cohesion of *A Doll's House* is perhaps, like that of *Oedipus the King*, too hard on the playgoer'

'The potency and power of the wild duck is that of the ghost in *Hamlet* or the witches in *Macbeth*—it unites and concentrates the implications which lie behind the action of individuals'

'Architecturally he never produced anything so harmonious as his most Sophoclean play [*Rosmerholm*]

'The four last plays of Ibsen are as sharply divided from his earlier work as the four last plays of Shakespeare'

'But Shakespeare and Ibsen can make the lightest word so inevitably in character that without need for the conscious implication of *A Doll's House* or the retrospective complexities of *Rosmersholm* every word can bear directly on the revelation of what the play is *about*, every word can have structural as well as local force' [On *Bygmester Solness*]

The greater the stress laid on these flattering comparisons, however, the less justified they appear, and one is left with a feeling that the claim for Ibsen's greatness is over-reaching itself. This is particularly so of the comment on the last few words of Rosmer and Rebekke before their suicide.

'There is a sense of an intolerable strain being resolved, as in the union of Antony and Cleopatra'

Husband, I come!

Now to that name my courage prove my title

Rebekke, who is too often thought of as a mixture of George Sand and Marie Bashkirtseff, really had more in her of royal Egypt. She came from Finmark, land of trolls and land of witches'

Yet for all the talk of Rebekke as 'quick and fierce as a tigress' until her conquest by Rosmer's nobility ('Cleopatra fell in love with Hamlet') and of the free and joyous acceptance of their common

destiny as comparable to the stoicism of Clermont d'Ambois or Siward's valediction to his son, it is difficult to see that the analysis of the play given by Miss Bradbrook really leads to so striking a conclusion. A re-reading of the play confirms the feeling that whatever allowances should be made for the 'Basic English' it is still extremely remote from Shakespeare. Can it be merely poor translation which sets Rebekke's hopeless account of her action

'And yet I *could* not stop. I had to venture just the least little bit further. Only one hairsbreadth more. And then one more—and always one more—and then it happened—That is the way such things come about'

on such a completely different plane from any comparable speech in Shakespeare?—say, Macbeth's

My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,
Shakes so my single state of man that function
Is smother'd in surmise, and nothing is
But what is not

Miss Bradbrook's conclusions are doubtless not so simple as I may have suggested, but comparisons of this kind have at least equivocal implications, and this may be some excuse for putting one's queries rather crudely and baldly.

Miss Bradbrook's general classification of Ibsen's work is shown in her chapter-headings. 'The Poet' deals with the non-dramatic verse, *Love's Comedy*, *Brand* and *Peer Gynt*, 'The Moralist' with the plays from *Emperor and Galilean* to *An Enemy of the People*, 'The Humanist' with *The Wild Duck*, *The Sea Woman*, *Rosmersholm* and *Hedda Gabler*, and 'The Visionary' with the last four plays. It will be seen that the 'problem-play' conception is as far as possible avoided. We are not asked to accept the Ibsen of Brandes, Shaw and Archer. 'Peer Gynt is a more serious work than *Ghosts*', and Ibsen's 'reputation as a sort of Jeremiah of the Enlightenment was certainly a libel'.

The account of *Brand* seems fair enough, though Miss Bradbrook admits the absence of any final resolution of the moral problem 'since the Voice which proclaims the God of Love speaks from the obliterating avalanche'. At one point she does indeed suggest a possible resolution at the deepest level, invoking section IV of *Little Gidding* if there is an implied comparison in terms of the verse one can hardly decide its validity from a translation, if not, then the connection via Kierkegaard, in terms of 'philosophy', is altogether too abstract to be of much significance. On *Peer Gynt* she accepts the interpretation that Peer is saved through Solveig's love, admitting that it would be 'overwhelmingly sentimental' if it were not so strongly controlled. For an account of the nature of this control, however, we are simply referred to all that has gone before, with the comment 'Solveig remains enskyed and sainted in a play where Anitra receives the tribute from Goethe' ('*Das ewige weibliche zieht uns an!*'). The chief power of the play is

said to be in its 'fulness and richness of ordinary life'

For *A Doll's House* the best case possible is made, as the Norwegian version of 'the great theme of late nineteenth-century literature throughout Europe, the sufferings of women in a masculine world the theme of *Anna Karenina*, and *Madame Bovary*, of *The Egoist*, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and *Portrait of a Lady*' (a not obviously pertinent generalization about these very different works nor is the particular comparison with *Anna Karenina* very convincing) Its chief virtue is seen in a Ibsen's discovery of a personal prose style, using Norse with a new concentration to embody an artist's vision of 'a problem of human nature in general', but it is admitted to be limited, though impressive *Ghosts* is said to be not a tragedy but an exposition of the materialist's nightmare—'the dice are loaded, as they are in *Jude the Obscure* or *A Shropshire Lad*'—with an underlying conviction of complete pessimism—'all mankind has failed'

In *The Wild Duck*, *The Sea Woman*, *Rosmersholm* and *Hedda Gabler*, life, says Miss Bradbrook, is always set against systems of thought, however advanced, and Ibsen is always 'for the complex as against the simple solution' his subject is 'human relationships in the fullest sense' Most people have felt *The Wild Duck* to be Ibsen's most successful work, from 1903, when Yeats allowed that it possessed 'emotion of multitude', downwards² Miss Bradbrook, following Virginia Woolf in *The Death of the Moth*, speaks of it as showing Ibsen's power 'to infuse the particular, drab, limited fact with a halo and a glory' Her account of the vitality in the presentation of the Ekdals is interesting, but the terms of her general praise of the play themselves raise doubts 'Like *Hamlet*, *The Wild Duck* can be interpreted by each man in his own image One day it will read as a tragedy, the next as the harshest irony ' Isn't this in itself a criticism?—Isn't it, on another level, a criticism of *Hamlet* too? But the least satisfactory part of *The Wild Duck* seems to me the treatment of Gregers Werle, who is too much of a caricature to be convincing or to bear the weight imposed on him it is not merely that his catch-phrases are dated by the translation *Rosmersholm*, 'Ibsen's most perfectly balanced play', has been glanced at above Miss Bradbrook expatiates on the Norse inheritance of the supernatural going back to the Eddas in connection with the white horses who symbolize the spirits of the dead (and similarly with the spectres in *Ghosts*, trolls in *Bygmester Solness* and warlocks in *The Sea Woman*) but it is difficult to believe that all this is really there in the play Perhaps there is an essential incongruity between these references and the naturalistic dialogue and technique *Hedda Gabler* is described as 'savage comedy' of the type of *Volpone* and *Le Tartuffe* this is better than the old attempts to see it as a

²The most persuasive analysis I have seen is the article by the late Miss M. W. Kelly, printed in the Winter, 1946, number of *The Welsh Review*

tragedy, but surely the lack of any positive values, presented or implied—Miss Bradbrook underlines their absence—marks it off as something very different from *Volpone*. In Jonson a firm grasp of positive values is implied in the weighty sobriety of the verse and the ironical undertone qualifying *Volpone's* extravagances. *Hedda Gabler* has a completely negative attitude: the question is whether this does not pervade more of Ibsen than Miss Bradbrook would admit, and whether it is not a serious qualification of his 'greatness'.³

Ibsen's last plays are described as reverting to the technique of the early lyrics, in an attempt to deal more directly with his own inner problems and needs, and are said to be written in descending order of dramatic greatness, *When We Dead Wake* being not really a play at all, but rather a personal testament. All involve remorse of conscience, the impossibility of restitution, and a recognition, which brings death, of having made the wrong choice. I find it difficult to follow Miss Bradbrook's analysis of *Bygmester Solness*. It is right, no doubt, to put aside the old interpretations in terms of hypnotism, rebellious daughters and Solness as Gladstone or Bismarck or Ibsen himself (and perhaps also the more recent ones in terms of Freudian symbolism). It may be less misleading to see the play as focussed principally in Act II, the 'great lyric centrepiece', 'a sustained love duet in the manner of *Tristan*', with Age and Youth lured on by the same castle in the air to have seen which is 'worth the price of the fall'. But one is not convinced: the signs point in too many directions at once (one aspect of Hilde, for example, seems related to Hedda Gabler or the unregenerate Rebekke). And is it, again, merely the question of inadequate translation which makes this seem excessive?—'His speech can rise till, like that of the great Elizabethan characters, it becomes the full voice, the total exposition of the play: yet it does not cease to be Solness who speaks'. Isn't there a discrepancy between the symbolism and the whole naturalistic technique? (Miss Bradbrook herself suggests that the winding-up of the play suffers on the representational stage.) Borkman's hymn to the spirits of the mine seems similarly unconvincing, but this, we are told, is 'poetry but not drama'. This play and *Little Eyolf* are admitted to be unequal, and *When We Dead Wake* is described as Ibsen's tragic palinode, 'a condemnation of all that he had written since he turned his back on poetry and Norway'.

Ibsen the Norwegian is the most thorough and sustained attempt that has yet been made to apply modern critical ideas to its subject. If it fails to persuade us to accept its conclusions, that is because of a gap between the analysis and the judgments. Miss Bradbrook removes many obstacles and misconceptions, showing us a recognizably serious artist at work, but there is nothing in her picture to establish Ibsen's claim to rank with Tolstoy or Shakes-

³Croce speaks of Ibsen's work as 'a poetry of complete pessimism'.

peare—or even, one feels, with Emily Bronte or George Eliot Yeats's objections are out of fashion—Miss Bradbrook dismisses them as an outmoded reaction of the 'companions of the Cheshire Cheese', and Mr Forster's comments in *Abinger Harvest* may perhaps be dismissed as not altogether serious. But the following paragraph from one of Henry James's letters written in 1893—it is quoted by Professor Peacock in *The Poet in the Theatre*—seems to sum up the case against Ibsen in a more damaging, because more serious and more balanced way

'Yes, Ibsen is ugly, common, hard, prosaic, bottomlessly bourgeois—and with his distinction so far *in*, as it were, so behind doors and beyond vestibules, that one is excusable for not pushing one's way to it. And yet of his art he's a master—and I feel in him, to the pitch of almost intolerable boredom, the presence and insistence of life. On the other hand, his mastery, so bare and lean as it is, couldn't count nearly as much in any medium in which the genus was otherwise represented. In *our* sandy desert even this translated octopus (excuse my confusion of habitats!) sits alone, and isn't kept in his place by relativity'

R G Cox

ROOM FOR DOUBT?

MR BOTTRALL'S SELECTED POEMS

SELECTED POEMS, by Ronald Bottrall, with a Preface by Edith Sitwell (*Poetry* London, 4/6)

The most interesting poems written by Mr Bottrall since 1932 have already appeared in these pages. The three collections of poems, *Festivals of Fire* (1934), *The Turning Path* (1939), *Farewell and Welcome* (1945), have all been sympathetically and conscientiously reviewed in *Scrutiny*. *The Loosening and Other Poems* (1931) was given honourable mention by Mr Leavis in *New Bearings*. Mr Bottrall has been treated as a considerable poet. *Selected Poems* now provides the occasion for a survey of the *œuvre* as it stands at present and for confirming or challenging the consensus of opinion about the value of the poems and the grounds for feeling hopeful of Mr Bottrall's further development.

In trying to account at this distance for the very favourable *accueil* *The Loosening* received in 1931, one is struck by the comparative chill in the general climate to-day and inclined to wonder at the optimism 'in the air' during the years just before and after 1930. Mr Richards perhaps represented an extreme when he wrote, 'The view that what we need in this tempestuous turmoil of change is a Rock to shelter under or to cling to, rather than an efficient aeroplane in which to ride it, is comprehensible but

mistaken' At any rate the poets who first came before the public when Mr Eliot was writing the *Ariel* poems could appeal to a general sense that the younger generation stood a better chance of weathering the difficult conditions than the 'ageing eagle'

The relevant passage in *New Bearings* reads 'It is perhaps not extravagant to conjecture that this difference (between Mr Botttrall and Mr Eliot) is representative, that we have here the voice of a generation that is, as it were, becoming acclimatized, or, to change the metaphor, acquiring new habits of equilibrium or learning to swim The positive energy may be felt in Mr Botttrall's rhythms even when they express frustration and undirectedness And it comes out explicitly again and again in something towards which his poetry as a whole is seen to move' To this Mr Harding rejoined, 'It is difficult to believe that Botttrall's extra buoyancy and "positive energy" were not within Eliot's spiritual compass, but that Eliot saw their limitations and so had to make a less direct approach to assurance It may be, as Mr Leavis suggests, a representative difference between the generations, but it seems possible that it is a difference between greater insight and less The question can be answered only by Botttrall's future work'

The *Loosening* volume, has not, it seems to me, been dwarfed by the subsequent work and deserves re-examination The reader interested in Mr Botttrall's poetry will be glad to learn that all the *pièces justificatives* are reprinted in *Selected Poems* They are pre-eminently poems which move towards positive concluding acts of faith Here are some examples

We own the natural ecstasy of the tree
Shooting sap into its branches, a finger-tip awareness
Of ourselves as a divided whole The life of being
Is ours, since we have bridged the gulf
And, twin-circuited, hold
Its electricity imprisoned within us

(S P p 20)

There is yet time
Time to call up Eros armed to his new Psychean task
Of mobilising moving dunes of grained sand
Into an adamantine pyramid
Rising upward, upward

(S P p 14)

The waters are lifting at length
Perchance

we have tracked
What song the sirens sang So may the disjoint
Time resolve itself and raise up dolphins backed
Like whales to waft us where a confident sea
Is ever breaking, never spent

(S P p 16)

Not for nothing was I born
Within earshot of that iron sea, where

Across the hedge the calf milked
 Its mother astride the webbed dew and the share
 Yearly uptore fresh paths beckoning the seed
 To a resurrection

(S P p 23)

They are all, it will be noted, statements, saying not doing. Their power to convince, Mr Leavis suggests, lies in the rhythm and the imagery. And if we look at *Salute to them that know*, for instance, we see that the climax is built up steadily, in a straight line, as it were, from other statements, statements about matters of accepted fact. Mr Bottrall is an undoubted master of neat formulation of the 'cultural situation'.

We are dismembered
 Into a myriad broken shadows,
 Each to himself reflected in a splinter of that glass
 Which we once knew as cosmos

The tone and the concision give this and similar observations full weight. They provide the contemporary reader with as much pleasure, presumably, as was obtained by the contemporary reader of, say,

Our little systems have their day,
 They have their day and cease to be
 They are but broken lights of thee

I am not, however, convinced that the strength, adequacy and poise exhibited in Mr Bottrall's preliminary statements are such as to lend power to the conclusions which are credit letters drawn on the future.

Mr Bottrall has been praised for his technique. There is no doubt that by understudying² Pound and Eliot instead of Joyce and Valéry he early acquired a manner quite distinguishably personal. Mr Bottrall stands up remarkably well to local analysis and passes the contemporary tests for craftsmanship. But when we examine the total organization of the more ambitious poems, such as the *Loosening*, the 'positive' ending seems merely added on. It is noteworthy that only detached passages of this poem are reprinted in the present selection.

Festivals of Fire made many of the minor poems in the previous volume look juvenile. Mr Bottrall, that is, was rapidly increasing the number of 'effects' he could produce. On the other hand, as could be seen from an article he published in *Scrutiny* in September, 1933, Mr Bottrall wrote the title poem without having made the radical criticism of Pound's *Cantos*. In this volume Mr Bottrall appears very much as a 'split man'. To write the verse of the best parts of this volume required qualities of intelligence and self-

²I presume 'understanding' S P p 11 is a misprint

criticism well above the average, quite apart from the virtuoso ability shown in the adaptation of *procédés* taken from Pound and Eliot. But the fundamental attitudes exhibited in these poems are remarkably crude and even naive. Furthermore, Mr Bottrall seems to have great difficulty in presenting his own experience in an unembarrassed form. A notable example in the *Festivals* volume is the account of his motor accident.

The radical criticism of the title poem was made by Mr Leavis in a review (*Scrutiny*, Vol III, No 1). This time he points out the factitious nature of the climax. But apart from 'riveted', the whole movement is strikingly similar to the sweeping closes of the earlier poems. 'The resort to anthropology is justified in a realization of the Life theme—unity, continuity and renewal, in a communicated sense of the mystery, potent enough to make an implicit criticism on the mechanico-communistic salvationism of the conclusion'. I have re-read the first section of the poem with this observation in mind, without, however, receiving the sense of the mystery of life. Mr Leavis at this date was still hopeful of Mr Bottrall's development.

To judge by the verse reprinted in *Selected Poems*, *The Turning Path* must have represented a sobering and painful transitional stage in Mr Bottrall's development. The difficulties he has always had in dealing directly with his personal predicament seem to have increased. There is something second-hand and blurred about

Then we put on an oval mask, bordered by aeons,
Fluttered supercilious lids among sketched
Insinuations and a wry mouth. We exchanged
The child's eye that invests every tenterhook
Moment with long-drawn surprise for a spendthrift
Vigilance, and sagely nodded as we watched
Each filament of time take fire, spurt out
In grandoles and blacken to eternal tarnish

(S P p 31)

and

Now, constricted in an agony of labour
We retch our hearts out, teasing the sublime
To intricate motives, adequate to the hour,
And envy no man's pedestal of rhyme

This failure is perhaps responsible for the predominance of conceits in these poems. Very often one gets the impression that once the original image flashed on him, Mr Bottrall merely worked out the associated images regardless of their relevance. Consider, for instance,

Thinking of this which will not, this which might not
Be, or could not, the heart
Fuses like salt under a blowpipe, grows liquid
And then hardens into a bead of fear

Nor do the following strike me as serious responses

Our world is a mutilated lion
Looking for a hole to settle in and die,
and

Like a child towards its nurse
Time goes stumbling with little steps

There is a surprisingly sagging element in these poems, but where all is taut, as in *Reveners Against Time* the total effect is circumscribed by the unalleviated circumlocution. One feels that Mr Bottrall could if challenged supply an equally adequate set of alternative images at any point in these poems. (It is perhaps one sign of the genuineness of *On a Grave of the Drowned* that we feel it could not be altered in this way)

The following lines, which appeared in *Scrutiny* for Summer, 1942, raise a pretty problem

Heart, look at those ripples of violet light
Greening the ice-filmed lake
And diligent tracery of birch
This is winter now, the soul's frozen night,
But the stored element of fire
Insidiously undermining will delightedly break
The hemming surface. See, the blocks urge
Their melting way to the long strait,
Clashing and crushing fear
And the hesitation that trembled on this verge

On my own granite cliffs
When the slow strokes of morning
Topped the breakers, blanching the lichen-grey coast,
How often have I seen gulls drift,
Teeter, spin and in great circles breast
The eddying air, feathers ruffling
In the joy of, the mastery of the blast
These airy lovers, billowing by whatever time
Or seascape, coupled in storm and stress,
No jealous worm tries or destroys, and centuries
Will witness their freedom and expressive prime

If these lines were composed before Mr Bottrall had read *Little Gidding*, he should in self-defence have mentioned the fact. If not, it would be interesting to know *how long* he had known *Little Gidding* when he wrote them. In any case, the echoes of Hopkins and Yeats come very near to parody and suggest an alarming degree of uncertainty in the poet's impulse. It makes one wonder whether Mr Bottrall feels that he can go further in his own manner without repeated 'shots' from his contemporaries.

These notes have been written with an eye on such phrases as 'Poets of decided gift' who may be read seriously as

attempting to express sensibilities of our time in verse' If the sensibility does not seem impressive measured by the highest standards, a glance at the host of present-day verse-writers is sufficient to confirm the view that Mr Bottrall still stands well to the forefront among his contemporaries His position is very much that of a distinguished soloist who plays his own cadenza in a concerto written by Eliot, Pound, Yeats and Hopkins (Of course, detailed analysis, which I have shirked, would be required to substantiate this view of a technique which is at once borrowed and original, where local success is no guarantee of total success) The playing of cadenzas is a proper work Mr Bottrall's enterprise in attempting to develop from the best contemporary models was admirable Yet here again closer attention to the text would serve to document the impression that Mr Bottrall is not developing further, that on the contrary Mr Leavis introduced the author of *The Loosening* as a 'young poet whose achieved work leaves no room for doubt about his future' One may pardonably wonder whether what now lies before us was the future Mr Leavis anticipated in 1932

To feel doubtful about the permanent worth of this body of verse somehow only heightens its contemporary interest Mr Bottrall seems more aware than any other writer of his generation of the possibilities of good verse writing *Uneasy Verdict*, for example, which is not very striking as an attitude, is an extremely interesting commentary on Yeats's middle-period mannerisms And when we come to the last poem of the selection, *Sestina Ritornello*, it is hard to repress the speculation whether it was not sired by Mr Empson who drew attention to 'those lovely sestines of Sidney' in *Seven Types*, or by Mr Auden, who attempted the form in *Look, Stranger*¹

As far as I could judge, the selection of poems seems to have been made with discernment, with the possible exception of *Rondeau (To Edith Sitwell)*, but as Miss Sitwell in the preface expresses her pride in the dedication and describes the rondeau as 'a poem of a perfect beauty, in which every vein is filled with light and fire', *tout le monde a dû y trouver son compte*

H A MASON

HENRY JAMES. THE STORIES

FOURTEEN STORIES BY HENRY JAMES, selected by David Garnett (*Rupert Hart-Davis*, 15/-)

Henry James's short stories and *nouvelles* are out of print so any publisher willing to devote some of his meagre allotment of paper to giving us any of that unique body of literary treasures deserves our gratitude at once. But whether Mr. David Garnett, who selects the volume just published, is equally praiseworthy, is another matter. We all have our personal favourites among the stories and no anthologist could satisfy everyone, of course, but it seems to me that the questions to raise in inspecting such a selection are—Will it help the reader new to this author to enjoy him and so want to explore the *œuvre* for himself? or the uninitiated who is at sea among the novels—will it help him to find his bearings and get some insight into the nature and aims of this difficult art? I am afraid Mr. Garnett's choice, backed by Mr. Garnett's Introduction, will be more likely to put the novice off and certainly won't offer any critical hints to those who feel lost in a fog. In fact, you can see this is so from the press it has had, the lip-service paid to the genius of Henry James rarely being backed by first-hand judgment and genuine appreciation, even among our higher reviewers.

Mr. Garnett has based his anthology on the appeal of quantity instead of quality, restricting himself to the shortest stories in order to get so many in. This seems to me a mistake: instead of fourteen stories, half of which are not worth owning (some worth reading once, some not) surely eight or nine first-class specimens of greater length would have been preferable. It seems hard on an author to have some of his worst pieces thrust in the public eye simply because they are short. For Henry James undeniably wrote some poor, some silly and some downright bad stories, and Mr. Garnett has dug them up (though there are some very good very short ones, such as *Greville Fane*, which he has apparently overlooked). Thus of those he reprints, *Paste* is an adaptation of one of Maupassant's slickest stories, and is hardly less shallow than its model, *Sir Edmund Orme* is a feeble, uncharacteristic effort—written for The Yellow Book and not even up to inclusion there, *The Private Life* is an earlier exercise, I should say, for *The Sacred Fount* and is silly in the same way, *The Tree of Knowledge* is a bore, *Maud-Evelyn* seems to me unprofitably unpleasant in the same way as *The Altar of the Dead* and some of the other stories written at that period—morbid is the nearest word to describe them, *The Diary of a Man of Fifty* and *The Marriages* are fair specimens of a class in which his work offers many more interesting examples, *Owen Wingrave* is a respectable piece that fails to rise to its possibilities, *Brooksmith* is a whimsical expression of James's social ideal, and nothing more. *The Pupil* was worth reprinting

if only to show that James can offer as lively and amusing a surface as any writer in the language—it is the only specimen in the anthology that introduces the author of *The Portrait of a Lady* and *The Bostonians*, the brilliantly witty novelist whose range and scope is so much wider than the conventional account of him, with its emphasis on *The Sacred Fount*, *The Ambassadors* and so on, admits. Only *The Real Thing*, *The Abasement of the Northmores* and *The Jolly Corner* are selections from the best level of his work, and that reach down to its core. And dispersed as they are, what effect can they have on the reader who does not already know how to relate them to the body of James's significant writings?

In the Introduction we can put our finger on the mistaken assumptions that have directed Mr Garnett's choice. What are we to make of this final exhortation to the reader?

'Henry James had no unusual understanding of psychology, no abnormal faculty of analysing the human soul. His characters are just as much alive as the people we meet in hotels or at the houses of our friends, but no more. They are not heroic or larger than life, characters whom to meet once is to know intimately for ever like. James's characters are ordinary people seen as indistinctly as we see people in real life, but the attitudes in which we meet them are revealed in all their complexities, with all the possible implications, so that we can grasp the situation as we seldom can in life.'

Is this an attempt to make James acceptable to the great Boots public by assuring them that he 'creates' 'people in real life' just like Trollope and Priestley? Surely Mr Garnett must know it his duty to warn the innocent reader off any attempt to take James as a naturalistic novelist. The briefest account of him should include mention of his descent from Hawthorne, that he is a novelist in the same tradition as Melville, should allude to his deliberate stylization of life, notice the techniques he devised for conveying his special interests, his recurrent symbols, his pre-occupation with the ideal of social life and the function of the artist in it. How anyone professing to write about James could pen the first sentence of the paragraph I have quoted is beyond belief. The son and brother of psychologist-philosophers, James was of a highly introspective habit himself—nothing is plainer—and he had the intuitive understanding of psychology that we find in all great literary artists. Such painful triumphs in morbid psychology as the short story *Europe*, the well-known *Turn of the Screw*, and the study of the relation of the heroines of *The Bostonians*, leap to the mind, but the real refutation of Mr Garnett's unpardonable obtuseness is in the very texture of Henry James's best work. And what are the 'ghost' stories but expressions of his psychological bent? the 'ghost' being a convenient symbol for the oppressive atmosphere of moral pressure, such as the family ghost that kills the hero of *Owen Wingrave*, or for the guilty conscience, as in *Sir Eustace Orme* (both reprinted here) or for some morbid state. In Mr Garnett's

last choice, *The Jolly Corner*, the 'ghost' symbol is explicitly used to embody 'the other self' of the hero, and so might have served to introduce the reader to one of this novelist's principal artistic devices

The value of *The Jolly Corner* would have been multiplied if beside it an anthologist had placed, say, *The Lesson of the Master*, (a mere twenty-five thousand words for which we would gladly have forgone *Paste* and suchlike) These stories are both attempts by James to justify to himself the line he took The horror the expatriate sees in his New York mansion is the self that James felt he would have become if, instead of settling to live the life of a writer in Europe, he had taken his place as an American in the contemporary world of business and politics James had no doubt that *that* would have been disastrous, but there was another alternative The Master, Henry St George, so like the actual Henry James in name, talents and appearance ('beautifully correct in his tall black hat and his superior frock coat') is unlike him in two ways—he has made a financial success of novel-writing by deliberately writing below his own best level, and he has lived the normal life 'I've had everything In other words, I've missed everything', says the Master to his disciple, who replies

'“You've had the full rich masculine human general life, with all the responsibilities and duties and burdens and sorrows and joys—all the domestic and social initiations and complications They must be immensely suggestive, immensely amusing”, Paul anxiously submitted

“Amusing?”

“For a strong man—yes”

“They've given me subjects without number, if that's what you mean, but they've taken away at the same time the power to use them I've touched a thousand things, but which one of them have I turned into gold? The artist has to do only with that—he knows nothing of any baser metal I've led the life of the world, with my wife and my progeny, the clumsy conventional expensive materialized vulgarized brutalized life of London We've got everything handsome, even a carriage—we're perfect Philistines and prosperous hospitable eminent people But, my dear fellow, don't try to stultify yourself and pretend you don't know what we *haven't* got It's bigger than all the rest Between artists—come!” the Master wound up “You know as well as you sit there that you'd put a pistol-ball into your brain if you had written my books!”

This is the more interesting possibility than that treated in *The Jolly Corner*, and it produced a much finer and more complex story The counterpoise to the mature and successful Henry St George is the young novelist Paul Overt (the author of *Roderick Hudson*, as it were), at the Master's urging he makes the sacrifice of the human goods Both the Master and Overt are Henry James potentials, played off against each other This story is not like

The Jolly Corner, a simple statement whose artistic effect depends entirely on playing on the reader's nerves, this is a drama, the tension arising from the uncertainty the reader is kept in and finally left in. The series of surprises in the structure are not the surprise of the trick plot of the well-made story of the Maupassant—Kipling—W. W. Jacobs type. The ambivalence, which is personal and inside James himself, conditions the structure: the uncertainty Henry James felt remains to the end and is expressed in the final ambiguity—what indeed was the lesson of the Master? It is one of the most remarkable of works of art.

Moreover, it exhibits one of James's favourite techniques, the structure built on alternative selves. It is a device for conducting psychological exploration in dramatic form. Even *The Diary of a Man of Fifty*, Mr. Garnett's first choice, which he says has a charming flavour of Turgenev, is stamped as unmistakably James's, slight as it is, in the mathematical elegance with which its case is presented. The elderly soldier who is the diarist and had blighted his life by leaving the Italian Countess, sees acted out by their younger selves, presented in the same relation—in the forms of the dead woman's daughter and a young Englishman—the opposite solution to the diarist's. I dwell on this technical device because it is a key one—it is a different thing from his use of the portrait as the idealized or dead or false self, which occurs in a great many novels and stories, starting with the very early *nouvelle Watch and Ward*. It is not merely a device or literary formula, or, like the portrait, the symbol of an intellectual idea, but a method of artistic procedure. It enables an exploration of certain possibilities of life to be presented dramatically, with the tensions, the contrasts and the psychological surprises that make a work of art instead of a narrative. It is obvious that such a method implies a very considerable degree of stylization of the raw material of life, a very special approach to characterization. Henry James takes the trouble to make this clear in many different ways, most of all in his use of symbolic names (as Overt above, and the Death of the Lion takes place in the country-house named Prestidge)—the only one most readers seem to notice is that of the Princess Casamassima—and symbolic figures, such as the Figure in the Carpet, the Beast in the Jungle, the Golden Bowl. How unkind, then, of Mr. Garnett to go out of his way to inform his readers that Henry James is not a different kind of novelist from the circulating-library average. Can he have inspired the blurb which describes this selection as 'the best introduction to the work of "the old magician" for those who have not yet fallen victims to the enchantment'? Enchantment is the character of the appeal made by, say, Mr. De La Mare's writings, but it seems to me a great injustice to Henry James to suggest that that is the nature of the interest his work has for us. His stature is that of Tolstoy, Conrad, the great international masters of the novel, and it is misleading to imply that he offers us, even in his short stories, anything less serious than a profound apprehension of life.

Of course if you take random dips into the shortest stories, as in this volume, you risk overlooking everything vital. Mr Garnett has put none of the keys into his readers' hands. Who would suppose from *The Abasement of the Northmores* that Henry James had written a whole body of stories about the life of the writer and the novelist—the artist, as he more generally considers him—and that these contain some of his liveliest, wittiest and most deeply felt writing, besides embodying some of his fundamental ideas? *The Author of 'Beltraffio'*, *The Figure in the Carpet*, *The Lesson of the Master*, even *The Coxon Fund*, *John Delavoy*, *The Middle Years*, *The Next Time*, *The Death of the Master*, are all more central than the one of the series reprinted, an introducer should at least have referred his readers to them. *The Real Thing* is fortunately here—it was an anecdote of Du Maurier's that provided James with a congenial theme—he made it a fable expressing his contempt as an artist for the English country-house culture and its social values. Characteristically, it is much deeper than it looks and will bear endless pondering. It links up with the novel *The Tragic Muse*, where he develops his theory of the function of artist and actress and their pre-eminence in a world of politics and society.

The account Mr Garnett gives of James's development is also misleading. 'He began as a painstaking writer for American magazines and most of his early stories are singularly feeble. He did not, at first, know how to write and he contrived stories with little imagination or knowledge of human beings. He developed slowly. He was thirty-six years old before he published the first story included here.' The author of *No Love* and *The Sailor's Return* has, naturally, a high standard. Still, I feel that the greenhorn should be told that before the date of the first story Mr Garnett thinks printable, James had published *Roderick Hudson* (1874), an accomplished and adult novel on a theme full of interest, *The American* (1875), also a novel showing considerable powers, and had got well on with *The Portrait of a Lady*, one of the finest novels in the language, that he had written many short stories of permanent literary value, of the highest interest in themselves and also of great importance to the understanding of his work—such as *Madame de Mauves*, *Daisy Miller*, *An International Episode*, and that, above all, he had written the remarkable *nouvelle* *The Europeans*, whose perfection, seriousness and originality as a work of art is surpassed by nothing he composed later. Continuing with a sneer at James's debt to Hawthorne Mr Garnett ends 'It was from that sort of nonsense that he escaped the following year when he came to live in Europe. A year in Paris, meeting Flaubert, Turgenev, Maupassant and Zola altered him.' Yet his correspondence shows that he was disappointed with these men of letters and disgusted with their *milieu*, that he thought their novels inferior to George Eliot's and soon decided to abandon France in favour of a permanent home in England. What he learnt from the French seems to have been mostly what to avoid, and what more valuable it was that George Eliot, for instance, could do. He was more in Dickens's debt than Turgenev's or Zola's, still more

than anything else was he rooted in his native tradition (his volume on Hawthorne in the English Men of Letters Series shows how seriously he took his fore-runner), a tradition which included Bunyan

No, I can't agree with Mr Garnett that his volume is 'the best introduction to reading James at all' There was a more modest and much better one, published by Nelson in the fabulous days of the sixpennies and sevenpennies and which, in its indestructible blue binding and excellent print, could until recently still be found on second-hand stalls It contained *Daisy Miller*, *An International Episode* and *Four Meetings*, stories stimulating, amusing and exquisite in themselves, which make sense together, and illustrate in the most apprehensible way James's principal subject, the International Theme No one who picked up that volume could suppose James a discouraging author or form any false views about the nature of his art And that reader would be launched painlessly on the right path—qualified to appreciate *The Portrait of a Lady* and to graduate to *The Golden Bowl*, to recognize the interest of such relevant works as *Pandora*, *Lady Barbarina* and *The Reverberator* I remember Nelson's cheap reprint with gratitude, for it lay around the house when I was a child and was my own introduction to Henry James

Finally, I should like to register a protest against a gratuitous and worse than unjustifiable display of animus Out of a four-page introduction Mr Garnett devotes two paragraphs to insulting American critics of Henry James in general He says 'If American critics admire James they do so with a bad grace, they admire in spite of the fact that he learned to write in Europe, that he preferred to live in England, that he was "snobbish" and wrote, sometimes, about our upper classes, that he did not seize every opportunity to criticize the world The theme of every American critic (even of Mr Van Wyck Brooks) is that Henry James abandoned his birthright and never became at home in England' etc I suppose I have read as much writing on Henry James in books and periodicals as Mr Garnett, since it is a subject I take a particular interest in, and I can find no justice in his attack Surely it was *only* Mr Van Wyck Brooks, among critics of any standing at all, who ever abused James as an expatriate, and the essentially international character of James's genius has long been a commonplace of American literary criticism As for the other charges, I don't recollect any but extreme Left-wing writers taking that line, and if it comes to that we have equally to blush for Communist 'literary' criticism of the same stamp No country is responsible for ideologically prompted critics *Pace* Mr Garnett I should venture that except what has appeared in the pages of *Scrutiny* all the intelligent criticism of Henry James and all the hard work on him has been done in the land of his origin Yvor Winters (in *Maule's Curse*), Edmund Wilson, Quentin Anderson, F O Matthiessen, among many others, have left us in no doubt of the high and able evaluation of James's art current

in the United States. When *The Hound and Horn*, the former highbrow review of Harvard, produced a number in honour of James, though it is true some of it was not very inspired criticism, yet I distinctly remember that the only really offensive contribution was by our Mr Stephen Spender. And Mr Garnett does not exactly deserve a bouquet from James's admirers for his present effort.

Q D LEAVIS

THE APPRECIATION OF HENRY JAMES

HENRY JAMES *THE MAJOR PHASE*, by F O Matthiessen
(Oxford University Press, 9/6)

I start with the last section of *Henry James The Major Phase* by way of assuring genuine admirers of James that Mr Matthiessen's book shouldn't go unhandled. The section is called 'The Painter's Sponge and Varnish Bottle', and it is devoted to illustrating in some detail how James improved *The Portrait of a Lady* in revising it. For in revising he does, for the most part, improve, much as one might have expected the contrary of any systematic meddling by the late James with the work of his early prime. We are not encouraged when the critic tells us that the 'writer's equivalent for the single flake of pigment is the single word', but the actual instances of revision given us are extremely interesting. We see James working happily for a vividder concreteness, a higher specificity, greater colloquial freedom and livelier point. Instead of 'their multifarious colloquies' he writes 'their plunge into the deeps of talk'. Osmond in the first version 'hesitated a moment', in the revised he 'just hung fire'. The Countess Germini, who originally 'cried with a laugh', in the revision 'piped', which defines her idiosyncrasy more sharply, and, as Mr Matthiessen well puts it, condenses her sound and manner into one word. And here is another good instance. 'Originally Ralph had concluded, "Henrietta, however, is fragrant—Henrietta is decidedly fragrant!"' This became a punch line. "'Henrietta does smell of the future—it almost knocks one down!'"' This leads us to a very significant kind of change in which the radical preoccupations implicit in James's sensibility assert themselves and his positives take on explicitness.

Ralph's "delights of observation" become "joys of contemplation". Warburton's sisters' "want of vivacity" is sharpened to "want of play of mind", just as Isabel's "fine freedom of composition" becomes "free play of intelligence". It is equally characteristic that Isabel's "feelings" become her "consciousness", and that her "absorbing happiness" in her first impressions of England becomes "her fine, full consciousness". She no longer feels that she is "being entertained" by Osmond's conversation, rather she has "what always gave her a very private thrill, the consciousness of a new relation".

This section of Mr Matthiessen's book, however, is offered only as a loosely attached appendix, it doesn't really belong. For *The Portrait of a Lady* doesn't belong to what he assumes to be James's 'Major Phase'. I say 'assumes', because I can't see that he does anything more critical than take over the conventional view that the great James is the late James—the James of *The Ambassadors*, *The Wings of the Dove*, and *The Golden Bowl* ('his three major novels'). In the conventional way he reinforces his reliance on the unanimity of fashion with an appeal to James himself.

'I agree with James' own estimate that *The Portrait of a Lady* was his first masterpiece, but that thirty years later he began to do work of a greater depth and richness than any he had approached before. My understanding of his development has been increased by the rare opportunity of reading through the hundred and fifty thousand words of his unpublished working note-books, which, extending from 1878 to 1914, concentrate most heavily on his aims and ambitions during the crucial period of the eighteen-nineties'

This last sentence gives us Mr Matthiessen's offer. He does with the note-books, however, nothing to give his offer substance, nothing that can be said to forward understanding of James's development or to justify the claim made for them. In fact, his use of them amounts to little more than a show, under cover of with some relaxed ruminations about the late novels have the air of being a serious contribution to criticism. Even if the note-books had contained more illumination than any we can divine from Mr Matthiessen's exemplifying, he would, to have brought them into enlightening relation to James's art, have had to be the active critic he doesn't show himself to be.

He relies, I have said, so much on convention as to feel absolved from attempting to base his assumed valuations in criticism. The 'Major Phase' of his title remains an unargued postulate. The inertness of this reliance is made the more oddly apparent by his showing that he knows of structures that have been passed on the works of the late period. I think this will be judged a fair way of putting it, since, though he formulates them as coming from himself, they make no difference to his attitude. He doesn't appear to realize their force as criticism, but rests quite unembarrassed on his *donnée*. The Major Phase is the Major Phase. When I myself in these pages criticized *The Golden Bowl* in terms that Mr Matthiessen may be said to summarize my conclusion was that *The Golden Bowl* is not a great novel, and that still seems to me the inevitable conclusion.

So with *The Ambassadors*. Mr Matthiessen concedes enough to dispose of that book as either a major creation or a successful work of art when (p. 37) he corroborates my own judgment that James utterly fails to justify the essential imputations of value that are involved in the offered theme of Strether's awakening to

Life True, we are given arguments for nevertheless persisting in a high estimate of the book

'What gives this novel the stamina to survive the dated flavour of Strether's liberation is the quality that James admired most in Turgeneff, the ability to endow some of his characters with such vitality that they seem to take the plot into their own hands, or rather, to continue to live beyond its exigencies. The centre of that vitality here is the character not reckoned with in James's initial outline. For what pervades the final passages is Strether's unacknowledged love for Madame de Vionnet. James has succeeded in making her so attractive that, quite apart from the rigid requirement of his structure, there can really be no question of Strether's caring deeply for any other woman. The means that James used to evoke her whole way of life is a supreme instance of how he went about to give concrete embodiment to his values'

The argument—one associates it with a familiar notion of criticizing fiction—itself is of a kind to promote mistrust, and it seems to me that the facts of the given case make it glaringly absurd here. If Madame de Vionnet is the centre of vitality, that doesn't say much for the book, for in my judgment she illustrates notably the characteristic weaknesses of the late James. The fussy subtleties and indirections of her presentment signal a lack of grasp, and a preoccupation with justifying an imputed value that, to a live sense of reality (such, indeed, as James's late manner can hardly be said to challenge with any insistence), appears ridiculous and sentimental. That a Strether's valuation of a Madame de Vionnet should be of the order that Mr Matthiessen defines for himself—one wouldn't mind that if only one hadn't to identify Strether as valuer with James, who asks us to see him and his predicament as invested with the dignity and weight of tragic irony. For the lady to be accepted by us as so miraculously transcending the familiar type and ethos, James would have had to do something more creative and convincing than the transmutation by atmospheric vagueness and Impressionist æstheticizing that he attempts.

Such indeed is the ineffectiveness of his art and his general feebleness in *The Ambassadors* as to suggest senility—though one knows that the actual case is more interesting than that. (The peculiar thinness of the book is obviously related to the fact that he had, appropriately, intended to do the theme in a *nouvelle*, but, of course, we still have to ask why, in his late period, the substance of *nouvelles* should tend to be spun out by overtreatment into full-length Jamesian novels.) Mr Matthiessen singles out for praise the expeditionary force from Massachusetts

'The portrait of the Pockocks—Sarah, Jim and Mamie—is one of James's triumphs in light-handed satire, in the manner he had mastered in *Daisy Miller* and had developed further, in that lesser-known but delightful *jeu-d'esprit*, *The Reverberator*'

—When I myself cast back in the comparative way I can only wonder at the abject feebleness that, in the treatment of one of his most congenial themes, can overtake the hand of a master. It is one judgment, of course, against another, but, reverting to the crucial matter of Madame de Vionnet, I suggest that the presumption lies against the appraisal that, exalting a figure as tragically impressive, elaborates itself in this mode

'His [James's] one living tap-root to the past was through his appreciation of such an exquisite product of tradition as Madame de Vionnet. Yet, as he created her, she was the very essence of the æsthetic sensibility of his own day. Strether can hardly find enough comparison for her splendour. Her head is like that on "an old precious medal of the Renaissance". She is a "goddess still partly engaged in a morning cloud", or "a sea-nymph waist-high in the summer surge". She is so "various and multifold" that he hardly needs to mention Cleopatra. And though Mona Lisa is not mentioned, James is evoking something like Pater's spell', etc

In the remaining novel of the 'major' trio Mr Matthiessen judges James to have done even better

Why it was that James could create women of much greater emotional substance than his men we can tell best by turning to *The Wings of the Dove*

I agree that there is more strength in *The Wings of the Dove* than in the other two. It is to be found, I think, in the presentment of that squalid background to Kate Croy's life which represents the pressure driving her into unscrupulousness and entitling her to some of our sympathy, and in the presentment of Mrs Lowder (Aunt Maud), magnificent personification of Edwardian or late-Victorian vulgarity. But the book depends for success even more on the heroine, Milly Theale, than *The Ambassadors* does on Madame de Vionnet. And 'substance', it seems to me, is the last word to apply to Milly Theale. To my sense, she simply isn't there: the effect on me is one of being directed, with endless iteration and insistence, to feel emotional intensities about a blank, it is an effect of elaborated, boring and embarrassing sentimentality. Mr Matthiessen, on the other hand, judges that James created in Milly Theale 'the most resonant symbol for what he had to say about humanity'. Again it is one judgment against another. And again, as presumptive evidence in favour of mine, I cite Mr Matthiessen's own appreciative commentary

He says (p. 59) that 'despite James's past-masterly command over the details of realistic presentation, he is evoking essentially the mood of a fairy-tale—which is an odd way (I quote from Mr Matthiessen's next sentence) of raising 'his international theme to its ultimate potentiality'. He describes as a 'spell' the method by which James tries to invest Milly with significance. 'James has

completed his spell and transformed his heroine into a Renaissance princess' In so far as it works, 'spell' is certainly the appropriate word for it, for what positive qualities does James even attribute to this supremely symbolic paragon? She is fabulously wealthy, that is all—unless one adds that she is American She isn't shown to us as especially intelligent, as representing any tradition, or as herself interesting Simply, she is (we are to understand) a fabulously wealthy American heiress, and as such has a right to expect enormously and vaguely of life, to receive homage as a Princess, and, because she is a Princess (American) to be pited as a supremely tragic figure when her expectations are brought up against the prospect of death There is more to be said for Isabel Archer as a tragic heroine, she is 'there', invested with convincing positive qualities, though James overvalues her But the only ground offered for seeing a more significant and interesting pathos in Milly's case than in that of any one else who expects enormously and vaguely of life is that she is an *American* heiress, the suggestion of significance and spiritual intensity is wholly a matter of the 'spell' If this worked for anyone it would be a success of illusion, depending on a fairy-tale abeyance of the adult mind—a triumph of mere suggestion

The reminder of James's devoted memories of Minnie Temple, the admired and idealized cousin who died young, has no critical bearing It may help to explain why James should have been able to suppose that in sentimentalizing round a void he was defining a presence, but it doesn't make any difference to what we actually have The weaknesses of that, as of the 'major' works in general, are obviously correlated with an over-developed technical pre-occupation, James, working at the problems he poses himself, fails to realize his themes sufficiently as life, with the result that he makes demands on us, for sympathy and evaluative response, that we can't satisfy Mr Quentin Anderson's recent essay in *The Kenyon Review* (Autumn, 1947), in which he argues with a great deal of force that James gives proof in his work of taking very seriously his father's system, leads one to suppose that a pre-occupation with symbolism may also have a good deal to do with the way in which, in framing his problems for himself, and handling his themes, he offends our sense of life and reality But no amount of explaining how James came to do what he did makes what he did other than what we find it to be

I hope I haven't appeared to suggest that I lump the three novels together as equal in unsuccess It goes with what I call the conventionality of Mr Matthiessen's approach that he does lump them together, failing to make the marked discrimination called for *The Ambassadors* I judge to be an utter failure, it hasn't a theme capable of sustaining treatment at novel-length In *The Wings of the Dove* the failure is at the centre of the conception, entailing what seem interminable dreary wastes, but the strong part is substantial and very impressive It is good James that one remembers vividly and goes back to *The Golden Bowl* has a

magnificent theme, and the genius of the author is magnificently apparent in the handling. It is in the central valuations that the book goes wrong.

It is my sense of James's greatness that makes me insist on my difference with Mr Matthiessen about the novels of what he calls the 'Major Phase'. For his view is representative, at any rate, I hope it isn't offensive to say that accords with a convention that has prevailed since about the time when Percy Lubbock's *The Craft of Fiction* was first acclaimed, if not longer. And until that convention is put out of countenance there can be no hope of getting for James's genius and achievement the recognition due to them. Let it be understood that, by the consensus of the best people, it is the late James that must be admired, and the late James will (with, say, Percy Lubbock's help) by many be admired—though it won't be James's genius they are admiring, nor will they be enlightened or exhilarated. Others will know they are bored, and some will conclude critically. The effect in any case is not to encourage the exploration of James, the vastness of whose *œuvre* must strike the conventionally initiated as peculiarly forbidding.

There is a betraying and unfortunate conventionality about the things, other than Mr Matthiessen's 'major' three, that the *conoscenti* star. Why, for instance, should *The Aspern Papers* and *The Turn of the Screw* get such disproportionate attention? They aren't, after all, the superlative products of the master's genius that the distinction accorded them suggests, many finer stories are left for the explorer to find for himself. And there are the really bad things that, having once been tipped, go on being. There is, for instance, *The Altar of the Dead*. The favour it enjoys goes back at least to the fervent pæan of acclaim that will be found in Miss Rebecca West's little book. And now we find Mr Matthiessen (p. 9) including it, in a routine way, among the recognized masterpieces. Yet it is a piece of sentimentality so maudlin and rank that an admirer of James, one would have thought, would rather not be reminded of its existence. (Mr Matthiessen commends in the same sentence *Owen Wingrave*, yet if—being challenged—he looks at it again, can he deny that it is one of James's feeblest things?)

On the other hand he can commit the injustice of this bracket: 'the strained virtuosity of *The Awkward Age* and *The Sacred Fount*'. 'Strained virtuosity' is a kind phrase for *The Sacred Fount*, in which James doesn't even seem to know what he is trying to do, and the inexplicitnesses and ambiguities proliferate in a way that suggests a disease rather than a meaning. But, though one may concede that in *The Awkward Age* there is an excess of *doing*, nevertheless this is an almost incredibly brilliant work, about the intention and significance of which surely no genuine admirer of James can be in doubt (though, indeed, Lubbock in *The Craft of Fiction* describes it as a comedy). To be capable of backing the late period as 'major' and dismissing *The Awkward Age*—it

certainly strikes me as odd. That is the work I should pick on as exemplifying, along with *What Maisie Knew*, a distinctively 'late' James who triumphantly justified himself.

I have an impression that the critical writing of American academic intellectuals is on the whole decidedly more respectable than the corresponding English work, and I am disappointed not to be able to hail the book under review as a striking corroborative instance. Yet, at the cost of stressing the pejorative suggestion of 'academic', one can perhaps still find in the book a representative superiority. This is a point that one can't make at all forcefully without specifying an English case one has in mind. But everyone on this side of the Atlantic knows the type and could produce an example. There is that large display of familiarity with the latest thing in critical apparatus and idiom and fashion, and in the world of Culture generally, there is the absence in the book of any justifying purpose beyond the purpose of writing a book—of an impressively intellectual kind, and there are those disastrous give-aways, when, from time to time, the writer ventures too much on his own, or, in using his acquisitions, betrays patently that he is handling them from the outside, with no real understanding.

The book under review must be granted a marked superiority to the English product I have in mind. Yet in the opening paragraph of the Preface this meets us:

'The creative writers of my generation have recognized and assimilated his values. Auden and Spender, no matter how widely they have diverged from Eliot in politics and religion, have continued to agree with him that James is one of the few great masters of our modern literature. Practitioners of the novel who have taken its art seriously have long since responded to the high claims which Percy Lubbock made for James's technique in *The Craft of Fiction* (1921).'

Thus, at the outset, with its confident offer of values so betrayingly assorted, suggests fairly the relation between pretension and intellectual quality that characterizes the book. Eliot, Auden and Spender—one can only suppose Day Lewis left out (after all, he has given the Clark Lectures) because he hasn't pronounced on James. And can anything better than academic commentary come from a writer on James who thinks that *The Craft of Fiction* offers anything better than an academic substitute for criticism, or that any novelist taking his art seriously (unless an Academy novelist) has ever supposed his practice to have been affected by the book? But Mr Matthiessen is right. *The Craft of Fiction* does enjoy a high reputation—which is a reason for being emphatic about the challenge.

The passage quoted above is representative. This, for instance, is how we are shown that the contemporaneity of James can be made out to be practically unlimited, so that Anglo-Catholics and Communists alike can rope him in.

'His intense spiritual awareness, drifting into a world without moorings, has told others beside Eliot that if religion is to persist, it must be based again in coherent dogma. At the opposite pole, our novelists of social protest can still learn much, as Robert Cantwell has incisively argued, from James's scale of values. His gradation of characters according to their degree of consciousness may be validly translated into terms of social consciousness, and thus serve as a measure in a more dynamic world than James ever conceived of' (p 151)

Yet there is, after all, a respect in which James is not altogether contemporary. In his novels

'there is none of the darkly sub-conscious life that has characterized the novel since Freud. James's novels are strictly novels of intelligence rather than of full consciousness' (p 23)

—To attempt to define the distinctive selections and emphases that mark James's treatment of experience—that might be a valuable undertaking. But Mr Matthiessen goes no further. He merely hands us the phrase, 'strictly novels of intelligence', as self-explanatory. In what sense are George Eliot's novels any less strictly 'novels of intelligence?' She, suffering too from the disadvantage of not having read Freud, is even less endowed (we gather) than James with the psychological resources that have enriched 'the novel since Freud'.

'James occupies a curious border-line between the older psychologists like Hawthorne or George Eliot, whose concerns were primarily religious and ethical, and the post-Freudians' (p 93).

It would be as much to the point to tell us of Tolstoy by way of establishing his pre-Freudian limitations that his 'concerns were primarily religious and ethical'. George Eliot, even though a lesser genius, is Tolstoyan both in her insight into the obscurer workings of the psyche, and in the art that renders the insight. But the academic commonplaces about her (they are to be found in Lord David Cecil's *Early Victorian Novelists*) perpetuate a blindness to the nature of her greatness, so that it is possible to adduce her (alternatively to the very different Hawthorne—who himself hardly fits Mr Matthiessen's intention) as representative of 'the older psychologists' who were ignorant of the darkly subconscious life' (Mr Matthiessen is welcome to his immediate point, that she doesn't deal with Lesbianism, as James, in *The Bostonians*, does—'without having to give it a name').

George Eliot was a peculiarly unlucky shot, but a critic, in any case, oughtn't to have been making such generalizations—and certainly oughtn't to have been giving Freud the place in literary history that Mr Matthiessen gives him. The unconscious and the subconscious didn't wait for Freud to let them into literature, and there are other novelists besides Tolstoy and George Eliot from

whom this truth can be enforced. And Shakespeare—but Shakespeare, of course, didn't practise the novel.

I will close with a difference about a work of James's I admire very much, *Washington Square*. I should have said that it didn't present the least difficulty to the reader, but if Mr Matthiessen is right in his account of it, then I in my reading have always been wrong.

'That book, despite its slightness, is so accurate in its human values that its omission from James's collected edition is the one most to be regretted. Those values are concentrated in the simple moral goodness of Catherine, in contrast to the cruel egotism of her father and the bare-faced venality of her suitor' (p. 122).

I should have said that the whole point of the story depended upon the not obscurely presented datum that the father's ironic dryness covered something very different from 'cruel egotism'.

F R LEAVIS

ENGLISH CHAMBER MUSIC, by Ernest Meyer (*Lawrence and Wishart*, 30/-)

To my mind this is the most important book on music published since Reese's *Music in the Middle Ages* and Lang's *Music of Western Civilization*. In some ways it is, for English readers, even more significant than those two monumental works, for it deals specifically with our own musical tradition, and with an aspect of it that has been shamefully neglected. English musicology has to its discredit more than enough sins of omission, if not of incompetence. A vast amount of early Tudor and pre-Tudor manuscripts still awaits investigation, the great seventeenth-century school of instrumental composers is unpublished and unexplored, except for a few isolated fragments. And now it has taken a scholar of another nationality to write the first comprehensive study of this music.

The account of the idiom of Gibbons, Ferrabosco, Jenkins, William Lawes and the smaller men which Dr Meyer offers, is a model of what technical analysis ought to be. He is not afraid to write in terms of the technique of music instead of talking around it, and his writing makes one eager to *hear* the works of which he is speaking. The copious musical examples and appendices contain music of a quality which amply bears out Dr Meyer's high claims, one hopes that this book will encourage performance of the music (particularly the two big, exciting fantasias of Lawes), and that publication and recording of a selection of the works may follow.

Although Dr Meyer writes about music in its own terms he never does merely that, he is interested in the technique as the medium in which human experience finds expression. Thus he has to consider too the social conditions that led to a given range

of 'emotional experiences', because the ways people feel and think cannot but be moulded by the circumstances in which they live. Dr Meyer's book is thus not only an account of the rise and fall of the English instrumental tradition, it is also an attempt to answer the question *why* it fell. The musical and historical parts of his book are complementary.

Historically, Dr Meyer's approach is Marxist, but never unintelligently so. I think he sometimes uses words like 'progressive' in a manner which gives an opportunity to those who want to interpret them stupidly, but it is clear from his many qualifying clauses that his own interpretation is anything but stupid. This is not only a book for which all living and lively English musicians ought to be grateful, it is also one which is of the greatest importance for those who are in any way preoccupied with the problems of the breakdown of the English cultural tradition. One hopes, since the price is no doubt unavoidably so high, that the book will find its way into all libraries.

W H M

*SECRET CHROMATIC ART IN THE NETHERLANDS
MOTET, by Edward E Lowinsky (Columbia University Press)*

This is a work of abstruse scholarship which can be tackled only by those with considerable musicological equipment. Even a not specifically musical periodical cannot afford, however, to pass it over in silence, for it is a work which is potentially of revolutionary significance. If Mr Lowinsky's carefully documented theories about secret chromaticism in the Netherlands motet are correct, they may involve a new approach to some sixteenth-century polyphony, they may mean that we have been performing much sixteenth-century choral music in a manner which denudes it of a passion that it ought to have. Whether Lowinsky is right or wrong, his case certainly merits serious investigation.

Moreover, although this is a 'specialized' book, its specialization involves the highest general intelligence. It is by no means merely academic, like Dr Meyer, Lowinsky always relates his discussion of technicalities to the motives behind them. He asks not only 'Did composers at this time use this particular technique?' but also 'Why did they use it, what development of the human spirit does it correspond to, what set of circumstances might feasibly have produced it?' Thus the technical discussion leads on to a fascinating study of the religious and social background that helped to create this idiom. One can hardly say that this book is 'suitable for the general reader', but there is much more in it than usually meets the professorial eye. It is one of the few technical treatises which is also a help to humane understanding.

W H M

GRAMOPHONE RECORDS

This is again a good quarter for contemporary English music. Rawsthorne's *Symphonic Studies* is a work whose claims to recording have frequently been urged in these pages, Britten's second quartet is certainly his most considerable instrumental piece.

The Rawsthorne still seems to me a landmark in English symphonic music. While having the same economy and structural tautness that characterizes the Piano Concerto, it is both powerful and noble in conception. Highly dramatic, it is never emotionally indulgent, the scoring is as lucid as the thought. The cleanness, both emotional and technical, of the work is brought out by the precisely vigorous performance by the Philharmonia Orchestra under Constant Lambert, and the recording (H M V under the auspices of the British Council) serves the performance well. It is melancholy, however, to reflect that this work is now nearly ten years old, and that Rawsthorne does not appear to have produced any large-scale work in the subsequent decade.

Britten's second quartet, played by the Zorian Quartet also on H M V, is a much more 'serious' piece than his first work for this medium. The somewhat fragmentary rhythm of the opening material suggests the influence of his operatic ventures, and parts of the Chaconne, like the mad scenes in *Peter Grimes*, recall Berg. As a whole, the work is extremely interesting, though I still haven't made up my mind about the (by now celebrated) Chaconne, and it is by this movement that the validity of the work ultimately stands or falls. I don't greatly care for the intermittent solo cadenzas, which seem to me a denial of the essential conception of chaconne form. They are, however, often moving in themselves, and are beautifully played.

Rubbra's second Violin Sonata is also given a most sympathetic performance by Albert Sammons and Gerald Moore, on H M V, and the recording is first-rate. The work is a good one, but it is fifteen years old, and Rubbra is a composer who matured late, who has become a major composer during the last ten years (roughly speaking from the First Symphony, 1937, onwards). So it is, I think, regrettable that the 'gramophone public' should have as an introduction to his work a piece which is not adequately representative of his stature. It is to be hoped that the British Council will follow up these records with a version of the magnificent new 'cello Sonata. This is one of his finest works, and among the handful of really great sonatas of our time. It offers no difficulty of approach, and could be immediately followed by the Third or Fourth Symphony.

British music of an earlier generation is represented by Delius's Violin Concerto, played by Jean Pougnet with the R P O conducted by Beecham, and recorded under the auspices of the Delius Trust. Why Sir Thomas should have chosen to re-record a work which has quite recently been adequately recorded, when there are still so many serious gaps in the Delius gramophone library, is one

of those little mysteries with which Sir Thomas likes to bewilder a grateful but long-suffering public. Taken on their own merits, however, these new records are very fine. Pougnet's performance perhaps does not get under the skin of the music as convincingly as Sammons's, but it is as exquisite in conception and pure in intonation as is everything this player undertakes. The recording, though not noticeably superior to the earlier Sammons set, is both rich and delicate.

From Columbia comes a recording of Prokofiev's *Alexander Nevsky* Cantata, evolved from his original film music. It is played by the Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Eugene Ormandy, with the Westminster Choir. It is impressive in an old-fashioned way, more barbaric than Rimsky-Korsakov, more academic than Moussorgsky, but quite at home in any concert of nineteenth-century 'national music'. I do not agree with those who consider Prokofiev's recent work a complete volte-face on the music he wrote in his Parisian days. His nostalgia for the bad old times was then in danger of toppling over from Stravinsky into Rachmaninov (see the last movement of the Third Piano Concerto). His work to-day has less equivocal relations with the nineteenth century, for that reason it seems the more honest, if the less 'interesting'. The recording and performance seem adequate. The solo lament on the field of battle is the best piece of music, and makes the set well worth having.

The other full-scale recordings are of the stock nineteenth-century symphonic repertory. Before I refer briefly to them, there are a few small recordings which are a little out of the everyday run. Pierre Fournier, the French 'cellist, gives a moving performance of three of the subtlest of Bach's Chorale Preludes, on H M V. I don't approve of the transcription of Bach's Chorale Preludes for a soloist with piano, for the texture of the polyphony is thereby ruined, one part, even if it be the chorale tune, acquires an illegitimate predominance. But the music is so wonderful, and the performance so sensitive, that this is a record that should not be missed. A record of an Oboe Concerto by Corelli, played by Evelyn Rothwell with the Halle Orchestra conducted by Barbirolli (H M V) is also presumably a transcription, though the label offers no information on this point. This is elegant and noble music, rather colourlessly played. I know Corelli is a 'classical' composer, but he belongs to the age of the classical baroque. I do not believe that his music should sound emasculated, even though it doesn't call for the vehemence of a Rosenmuller. However, in the absence of other adequate Corelli recordings, this one is worth having. It is inoffensive, which is more than can be said of Barbirolli's Wagnerian full orchestra version of Purcell of some years back.

H M V also give us Beecham's performance of Berlioz's *Le Corsaire* Overture. If not one of Berlioz's more important pieces, this is a representative one, and performance and recording are superb. It reveals once more the subtlety and originality of Berlioz's linear thinking. Another fine single H M V record is of the duet

SCRUTINY

A Quarterly Review

Edited by

L C KNIGHTS

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W H MELLERS

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THE TWO HENRY JAMESES

[This essay is introductory to *Henry James, His Symbolism and His Critics*, which will appear in the next *Scrutiny* —Ed.]

THE editors of *Scrutiny* have asked me to resume my conclusions about the relation between the work of Henry James and the theology and psychology of his father, the Swedenborgian mystic. The chief of these is that the novelist based an extensive system of symbolism on his father's view of the world, and that this is most clearly apparent in the last three completed novels.¹ The work of the elder James has not had a great deal of attention from critics or historians of philosophy, but the late turn of the wheel which has brought existentialism into view may awaken interest in his almost secular mysticism, a mysticism which imprisons the divinity in man.² His prime emphasis falls just where his successors now place it, on our estrangement from the godhead which dwells in us, and in us alone.

Our estrangement or alienation brings about a complete inversion of reality. Existing human institutions and socially sanctioned motivations are topsy-turvy. The visible church is God's enemy, visible virtue is simply selfishness, one form or another of the desire to be 'somebody'. The elder James's handling of this insight anticipates Veblen's analysis in *The Theory of the Leisure Class*. He accepts rampant individualism as a matter of course. Those who are given over to lust or desire for the power conferred by money or status are in the grip of 'honest natural evils'. These are not damning, they are an inevitable preparation for our regeneration. The people whom Lincoln Steffens later described as 'honest crooks' must run the government, for humanitarianism would infallibly mistake the strength and character of the energies which animate the social scene. America is actually better off because it does not freeze selfishness into enduring institutional forms.

However there is an absolute evil. Self-righteousness, self-worship, is a sin without remedy. What the self-righteous man does is to invert the godhead within him and try to make it a possession like any other possession. By such a man 'God-in-us', which we know as conscience, is given outward form—as in an

¹The earlier study, 'Henry James and the New Jerusalem', appeared in *The Kenyon Review*, Autumn, 1946, pp 515-566.

²Cf. Austin Warren, *The Elder Henry James*, and Herbert Schneider, *A History of American Philosophy*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1947.

image of the Virgin—and appropriated. When we worship ourselves we need a visible idol. We seize a young girl who represents the divine love or conscience and try to make her the priestess of our self-worship. Gilbert Osmond in *The Portrait of a Lady* is just such a sinner. He seeks to make a 'portrait' (inversion) of the 'lady' (divine love). By doing so he brings to a halt within himself the process of regeneration. He worships an object which stands for self-love, or makes that which is real and inward something outward and static. One cannot over-emphasize the importance which the elder James attached to moral energy, moral spontaneity. His universe is one of moral energies which the self-righteous man tries to arrest.

This is the fatal case. But it is not the history of the world past or to come. The elder James had an apocalyptic vision characterized by the title of his last major work, *Society: The Redeemed Form of Man*. The stages which lead to this heavenly socialism are variously described, but for the present purpose they may be called formation, creation and marriage. The first thing God does is to make something other than, foreign to, himself, a set of moulds or matrices into which to pour his love. He limits and therefore denies himself in order to increase the number of beings capable of love. By this act the divine love is wholly swallowed up in creatures foreign to it. This is 'formation'. Hereafter creation, the process which makes us able to love, begins.

'Creation necessarily involves the creator and obscures his perfection in the exact ratio of its evolving the creature and illustrating his imperfection. Unless therefore the creature *himself* reproduce the creative infinitude concealed in his nature it must be forever obliterated from remembrance.'

The way in which the creature illustrates his imperfection is to abandon his parents, the divine love and the divine wisdom, and to cleave to his wife, the Eve or selfhood. In other words, the millions of finite men conclude that they are separate and distinct, and, unaware that a single divine energy is at work in them all, try to increase their sense of separateness by *appropriation*, sexual, economic, or political. The selfhood, Eve or *proprium* (the terms are interchangeable) is in the ascendant and gets Adam (mankind) to conceive of the divine wisdom as 'nature', or the physical world. The world as Adam under the thumb of Eve sees it is a place full of objects to be grabbed, a place in which it pays to be 'somebody', and, finally, a place ruled over by a God like ourselves, an arbitrary and exacting ruler, who cherishes those who are useful to him and hates those who are not.

A man can be said to be regenerate when he gives up this theological and metaphysical dualism—abandons, that is, the notion that his selfhood stands over against nature, believes instead that 'nature' is a name for the divine wisdom, and releases the imprisoned divine love. Such a man thinks God's thoughts (nature) and feels

God's emotion (selfless love) This inclusive narcissism cannot be fully realized till all men see the world as a poem which describes their own divine nature When everyone is able to abandon the fiction of separateness, and live simply through acts of selfless love, the marriage or third stage has been reached God and man are united in the 'divine-natural humanity'—a great orchestra hymning itself, an orchestra in which we can distinguish performances but cannot identify the performers

The elder James's system aims at a complete parallelism between the history of mankind and the history of a given individual In naming over the aspects of personality we are naming the energies which account for the creation and dictate its consummation in the divine-natural humanity These are the divine love, the divine wisdom, the Adam, the Eve, the senses, the intellect, and that which includes all these, the Lord or divine-natural humanity An individual man may be thought of as the Adam, containing the divine love and shaped by the divine wisdom He is potentially able to order the world as a vision of that wisdom, but is distracted by the Eve who incites him to appropriation and thus *disorders* his view of his nature, and contends with the impulse of his conscience (the indwelling divinity) to love his fellows I quote from my earlier account (note that the elder James makes a symbolic use of the contradiction in *Genesis* which tells of the creation of man male and female *before* Eve was fashioned)

'When the Eve's phenomenal understanding has built a science which is a complete inversion of divine truth we perceive the self which has contrived the inversion, and the divinity within us is released from bondage Thereafter we order nature as a true cosmos, an image of God's wisdom, which becomes our own Man, says the theologian, "has the task and the power divinely given him of subduing all nature to himself, and so leading it back to him from whom it originally comes" With this consummation what may be called the "field" of the creation reaches an equilibrium in the unified consciousness of God and man What has taken place is a "marriage" of the finite and the infinite the Adam has broken off his liaison with the Eve and been wholly vivified by the female Adam or divine love, the Eve has been forced to accept the fruits of the divine wisdom Selfishness gives way to love and science to "spiritual perception"'

All this sounds remote enough from the novelist But when we consider the psychological insight with which the theologian treats the stage of the creation (leaving formation and marriage out of account for the moment) the power of the scheme becomes apparent The conflicts involved must be faced one by one The theologian did not think that there was any short-cut, emotional or intellectual, to salvation Sudden conversion amounts to regression While the Eve and the conscience are struggling a man

cannot, without becoming a devil or an infant, transcend the limiting conditions of 'identity' (we may substitute 'personality' here). These limiting conditions are absolute self-love or utter abandonment to the love of one's fellows. Gilbert Osmond and Lord Mark of *The Wings of the Dove* are instances of the loss of 'identity' through complete selfishness. Lord Mark, like Osmond, attempts (in the great Bronzino scene) to appropriate the divine love in the form of an image or portrait. The other extreme, a *premature* abandonment to the love of one's fellows makes one morally an infant. (So the elder James described Emerson). We must live out or live through the delusion that we are separate and that we can possess women, wealth, aesthetic 'values' or postage stamps. We steer a course between absolute self-love (the elder James calls it death', and Lord Mark, for example, is Death) and a lapse into infancy. The dead man worships himself, the infant is lapped in the divine love and wisdom, 'a mere dimpled nursing of the skies', cared for by his parents and incapable of conscious action. The dynamism of this view of our psychic career and its keen awareness of the personal and social meaning of possessiveness sets it off sharply from other mystical accounts of the nature of man. Although the reader is always aware that the elder James is afraid of the self (or rather, of *himself*) he is at the same time aware that that fear makes him acute.

In fact, his use of these allied ideas, the ideas of the limits or boundaries of identity, and of self-love and love for others as the forms of moral energy, mark him one of the great nineteenth-century naturalists of the self, who like Stendhal and Nietzsche, found intelligibility among the passions, reason in desire. The self is to be destroyed (or put to another use) in the end, but the elder James was no utopian and must acknowledge on his own terms that it is God's device for making us *aware* of our estrangement from him. It is needless to suggest how much the theologian disregarded in the attempt to cobble up an absolute out of his insights. Freud's fortunate alliance with scientific positivism and nineteenth-century liberalism led him to value the self and seek ways of understanding it as an entity. But for the elder James selfhood was the enemy. The interesting consequence is that although we may compare the elder James's selfhood to the ego, his gross, disordered Adam to the id, and his 'God-in-us' to the superego, the struggle in the soul of man has different protagonists. In Freud the ego, and in James the superego. Or, more precisely, there is no question in the Swedenborgian of a balance of conflicting claims, the drama in the soul of man becomes history and has a predetermined conclusion. No new facts can be taken into account because there is no possibility of framing fresh hypotheses. We step with ease from the closed world of the father's theology into the closed world of the son's novels, but in neither case can we find an opening for scientific inquiry.

Before I undertake to give instances of the novelist's use of his father's work a more detailed account of our struggle with the Eve

is required. Both father and son declare unequivocally that in Europe men are in the ascendant and women subordinate, and that in America the case is reversed. In the elder James the assertion has an explicit technical meaning: the European, incited by his selfhood, lives under the dominion of lust, and subjugates the feminine element in his personality, conscience or 'God-in-us'. In the novelist this technical meaning is symbolically expressed. What has been called the 'international situation' is usually a conflict between the (spiritually) American girl and the (spiritually) European man, or, most generally, a conflict between a person in whom the feminine is uppermost and a person whom the Eve has made the creature of mercenary lusts. It follows that the sex of the novelist's characters is in the first instance, symbolic, and secondarily, or for appearance's sake, realistic. (This may come as a relief to those who have found the relation of men and women in James hard to take). In certain men, and in particular those who are in the true sense artists, the feminine is dominant. These men alone are capable of a marriage which symbolizes the final marriage of appearance and reality, of a marriage that is, in which heart subdues head, and the husband does not subject his wife to a 'gross Adamic servitude', but becomes her adorer.³

The artist is the prototype of all those who order the Adam under the aegis of the conscience rather than the Eve. According to the elder James he is 'the only regenerate image of God in nature, the only living revelation of the Lord on earth'. The 'Lord' is a union of God and man, the divine-natural humanity which is to come. The artist is like him because he exhibits, as far as one now can, spiritual individuality. He is known not for what he is, but for what he does. His activity reveals him a 'regenerate image' of God because he orders that revelation of God's nature which is his consciousness under the auspices of the conscience or social self rather than the Eve or selfish self. The true artist is not a person with an 'identity', he is a creative force, recognizable, as the creator himself is recognizable, only in the quality of the thing he makes. To use the terms I have employed above, the artist sees the Adam or the world (these two being identical) as a manifestation of God's wisdom—a chart of his nature. Nature, the Adam, the world, these are names for the 'image' of life—for the deity as manifested in form. In brief, *it is the act of seeing that image as his own which makes man divine*.

In the novels what is traditionally the macrocosm, the realm of material things, simply illustrates the nature of the microcosm. The younger James called his collected works after New York—in both father and son America is the realm of the spiritual or feminine—the site of the New Jerusalem—and illustrated the

³The theme of the symbolic meaning of marriage is treated in James's early story, *Travelling Companions*. In addition, this story contains the whole array of symbols which James was to employ many years later in his last three completed novels.

edition with pictures of London, the realm of appearance. Thus the New York Edition is itself a symbol of the ultimate marriage of appearance and reality—the marriage which is celebrated in *The Golden Bowl*. The artist must be a 'realist', must devote himself to the realm of appearance, in order to make its function as an *image* of reality plain. No man can afford to despise appearance. He must make the right use of it. On this account the elder James thinks the philosophic idealist a moral fool. The regenerate man does not abandon appearance to the unregenerate. But a house, a horse, a rose, are not for him things possessed or desired. They are symbols necessary to the representation of man's divine nature. The 'world' is a congeries of tropes standing for that nature. God has projected himself (we may say) as a work of art, and when we recognize the work for what it is we become divine.

The careful reader of Henry James, the novelist, will have seen that the system I have attempted to sketch is congruent with his temper. (I ought to mention here an essay by William Troy, 'The Altar of Henry James', which emphasizes this temper and even isolates certain symbolic emphases which turn out, on examination, to stem from the elder James).⁴ But such a reader will remain doubtful as to how anyone seeing the world as the elder James saw it would be able to take in a very large draught of facts, of social circumstance, of insight into character. I have urged that this was a mysticism with a difference, which took in at one survey so broad a field of human activity and motivation that when one applies it to specific situations as the novelist did the result appeals to one's sense of emotional fact. But the son's own testimony on the question of his father's 'experiential authority' will carry more weight.

'If he so endeared himself wasn't it, one asked as time went on, through his never having sentimentalized or merely meditated away, so to call it, the least embarrassment of the actual about him, and having with a passion peculiarly his own kept together his stream of thought, however transcendent and the stream of life however humanized? There was a kind of experiential authority in his basis as he felt his basis—there being no human predicament he couldn't by a sympathy more *like* direct experience than any I have known enter into

(*Notes of a Son and Brother*)

Perhaps the best way to begin a review of the novelist's uses of what he called 'father's ideas' is to read *The Tragic Muse*. In the character of Gabriel Nash we have a gay and affectionate sketch of Henry James's father at work. For the elder James life consisted keeping together the 'stream of thought' and the 'stream

⁴This essay may be found in F. W. Dupee's collection of James criticism, *The Question of Henry James*.

of life' or, to use his own terms, endeavouring to marry appearance and reality. Gabriel Nash's credo is a straightforward abstract of the elder James's point of view. Moreover, this novel helps us to avoid the pitfalls of aesthetic positivism which surround the figure of the novelist nowadays. It makes quite explicit the relation between morality and style. Virtue, as I have pointed out, is never a matter of rewards and punishments, sheep and goats. It consists in sinking all one's individual claims in one's love for the image of life. There is only one way to express such a total allegiance, and that is through one's style. Any other form of worship makes the worshipper more important than his worship. Gabriel Nash puts it this way:

'Life consists of the personal experiments of each of us and the point of an experiment is that it shall succeed. What we contribute is our treatment of the material, our rendering of the text, our style. One has one's form, *que diable*, and a mighty good thing that one has. I'm not afraid of putting all life into mine, and without unduly squeezing it. I'm not afraid of putting in honor and courage and charity—without spoiling them. on the contrary I shall only do them good.'

What we are concerned with is not, however, the novelist's use of 'father's ideas' as ideas, but rather with their transmutation into dramatic and symbolic form. A group of familiar short stories will provide some clues to the way the younger James effected this transmutation. *The Real Thing* gives us a starting point. In this little parable James dramatizes the relationship between morality and style explicitly stated by Gabriel Nash. That so simple a story should be so widely misread is surprising. Yet James must have anticipated the misreading. He knew, that is, that his contemporaries were infatuated with the figure of the artist, and thought art a moral end in itself. He considered such a view of the artist an impiety and a horror, but he nonetheless threw the sops of apparent conformity to an audience which hungrily and blindly snatched them up. This question would take me too far afield, but I must add that the device of seeming to accept widespread errors while covertly controverting them is in entire accordance with the scheme of the elder James. His son may be said to offer us an opportunity for salutary though vicarious moral transgression. We make much of the fate of the artist *as such* in *The Real Thing*. The author apparently expected us to discover our error by experiencing its consequences. We have been slow to do so. In this story the two sets of models are inversions of one another. Major and Mrs. Monarch are, in the elder James's sense, 'dead'. Frozen into the forms prescribed by caste, completely generic and completely incapable of moral spontaneity, they are also, and by the same token, fixed, intractable pictorial 'values'. The man who collects fixed aesthetic values of this sort is a sinner just as the capitalist or the sexually acquisitive male is a sinner. The artist

of the story sins not simply against art but against himself To prize Major and Mrs. Monarch is to prize an image of one's own self-righteousness The cockney girl and the young Italian who comprise the opposed set of models represent the 'ideal thing' because they are morally spontaneous They may be used to illustrate dramatic situations because they are capable of love for others *unlike* themselves

The artist of *The Real Thing* saves himself The devilish hero of *The Author of Beltraffio* does not He collects fixed aesthetic values and prizes the illusion of materiality, prizes the dense and static, above everything else He is neatly opposed to his wife whose sense of her own righteousness is *her* chief possession Between them they kill the child who represents their 'marriage', and James indicates in this way their moral death—they have sought to make a possession of the divinity *Madame de Mauves* deals with another self-righteous woman whose sin is sharply contrasted with the 'honest natural evils' of which her husband is guilty Her treasonous betrayal of her American heritage is the worst of sins

The Figure in the Carpet is not about the nature of the 'figure' (though it seems plain that the allusion is to the system of the elder James) but about the consequences of trying to make truth a possession To do so is to invert truth, to make it serve one's self-love Corvick and his wife seize upon the truth for their own ends and die the death of the self-righteous who make the divine love serve their own egoism

The Jolly Corner recapitulates the dramatic themes set by the elder James's picture of man travelling down a corridor bordered by death and infancy toward the point at which he confronts his selfhood and casts it out In this story the Eve or other self appears to the hero, the Adam or image of life (rightly viewed by the hero, wrongly by the other self) is represented by a house, and the divine love appears in the person of the haunted man's mistress These symbolic elements recur in the same unmistakable way in *The Sense of the Past* Such instances might be multiplied, but a more detailed discussion of three novels must suffice here

The Ambassadors, *The Wings of the Dove* and *The Golden Bowl* were planned as a single poem embracing the history of mankind They represent three stages in the experience of the race which are paralleled by three stages in the moral career of an individual In the system of the elder James three 'churches' represent the principal steps in history The first, the Jewish church, was dominated by the idea of law, of conformity, and hence of righteousness Our moral infancy is likewise permeated by law, but when we grow up we perceive that to respect law is to respect 'persons', lawgivers, who are distinguished not by their capacity to love or create but by their self-righteousness With Saint Paul the elder James held that law had been given us that we might see its uselessness The 'ambassadors' of the first novel may be compared to the Prophets They misconstrue Europe, the realm of

appearance. No marriage of appearance and reality can be consummated by the righteous. They are isolated from their fellows.

The second church, that of Christ, is not to be confused with those which bear his name, for they are inversions of the true church. The redeemer is not a unique being, but the divine love at the beck of every man. The historical Christ had an exemplary mission to show what all men potentially are. The office of this second church is treated in *The Wings of the Dove*. This is the stage in our lives during which we must either confront and cast out self-hood or 'die', that is, worship ourselves. Merton Densher is mankind undergoing regeneration. Under the aegis of his self-hood, Kate Croy, he sets out on a course of monetary and sexual acquisition. But Kate over-reaches herself, she pushes Densher to the brink of a loss of identity, so that he turns to the divine love, Milly Theale. Under her influence he is granted a vision of his other self, the creature he would become were he to appropriate Milly, Lord Mark. To see the consequence of living under Kate's dominion is to free himself of her. At the end of the novel mankind, conscience-stricken, but not yet regenerate, is presented with a forced option. He is offered the kingdoms of the earth (Milly's fortune). To accept would be tantamount to taking Milly at the valuation put upon her by London—to becoming the Lord Mark of the Bronzino scene. He refuses, and this entails a total surrender to love, for his 'identity' or balance between love of self and brotherly love is dependent upon his relationship to Kate Croy, and Kate is the bride of appearance, not reality. At the end Densher is mankind spontaneous, or morally free, but not yet united with his fellows and the divinity in the divine-natural humanity.

The marriage of appearance and reality is celebrated in *The Golden Bowl*. A full account of the symbolism of this novel would require a volume, but the reader who has the patience to hunt will find it relatively easy to sort out the principal relationships. The book has to do with the coming of the New Jerusalem (American City). In a sense it recapitulates the two preceding novels, for the psychological and cosmological scheme is fixed. For example, selfhood reappears as Charlotte Stant, and the tie between Maggie Verver (divine love) and Adam Verver (divine wisdom) is essentially that between Milly Theale and Sir Luke Strett.

Before the third or New Church can arise in America Prince Amerigo, the world of the disordered Adam, must break off his liaison with selfhood and marry divine love. Prince Amerigo must, in other words, not simply be *thought* to have discovered America, he must actually do so by subordinating himself to Maggie. With his selfhood the senses (Colonel Assingham) and the intellect (Mrs Assingham) are allied. Mrs Assingham's interest lies in the maintenance of the realm of appearance, or, to use James's analogy from society, 'keeping up appearances'. The so-called marriages which she thinks she has 'made' must persist. They are representative lies, standing for the whole mass of delusions which beset mankind under the reign of selfhood. If the truth about these

marriages becomes known appearance, the lie, will dissolve. Nothing will be left save truth. If the divine wisdom is *not* characterized by selfishness (as Jehovah is, according to the elder James, or as Adam Verver is when tied to the grasping Charlotte Stant) and divine love is *not* subject to 'gross Adamic servitude' as Maggie is subject to Amerigo, the senses and the intellect must, as far as they can see, shut up shop. The state, the ecclesiasticism masquerading as a church, capitalism, lust itself, must all disappear for they are built on these very assertions.

By an ironic turn borrowed from his father Henry James makes Mrs. Assingham, the intellect, defeat herself and the selfhood she serves. She breaks the golden bowl, a symbol of man united to his selfhood (the foot being the senses, the stem the intellect, and the cup the selfhood which holds our delusive acquisitions), with a result quite contrary to her intention. Prince Amerigo sees his other self in the golden bowl, just as Densher had seen the meaning of his act realized in Lord Mark, and invites Maggie's aid. Maggie meets the fury of Amerigo's dispossessed selfhood with self-sacrificing love. Charlotte has no delusions to live upon. Everywhere she turns she is confronted by love and wisdom. She is led off in a silken halter to become the cicerone of the temple of the divine-natural humanity. Appearance, the sum of all the objects of art which *represent* the divinity, is to be housed in America, the spiritual realm. The 'ideal thing' and the 'real thing' have been united, and the Principino will inherit the earth.

QUENTIN ANDERSON

PROFESSOR CHADWICK AND ENGLISH STUDIES : COMMENTS

The following communications, interestingly dissentient, have been received

Dear Sus,

H M Chadwick was obviously an inspiring teacher, and it is good to have an appreciation of him and his work from a pupil. At the same time I think certain questions are being confused which repay sorting out. I shall try to start from the most specialized ones, and work up to those likely to be of more interest to readers of *Scrutiny*.

1 Compulsory philology (in the strict sense). Your contributor quotes Chadwick himself on the place of this in linguistic studies 'it is no more necessary for the study of Anglo-Saxon than it is for that of Latin or Greek or a modern foreign language'. Excellent, then we have in principle got this particular obstacle cleared out of the way. (Chadwick would no doubt have admitted some attention to philology in so far as it facilitates the *empirical* study of a language). The point is, then, to ask whether study of philology is in fact required even when there is no compulsory Old and Middle parts of the predominantly literary Course III in the Oxford English School. Where the evangelizing zeal of individual tutors may drive them to is another matter.

2 If, then, Anglo-Saxon does not necessarily mean philology, what about Anglo-Saxon in general? Chadwick, as quoted by your contributor, goes on to this, arguing primarily 'in the interests of Anglo-Saxon studies'. It is clear that there need be no quarrel with the positive side of Chadwick's contention—that Anglo-Saxon can profitably be studied 'in association with the early history and antiquities of the country', and your contributor's testimony shows what a success Chadwick made of this, as an élite School. But the contention that this is the only proper context for such studies is more disputable. Chadwick's view that English studies 'do not afford a good training for [Anglo-Saxon studies]' may be sound, but can hardly be conclusive for those whose primary interest is in the question whether the study of Anglo-Saxon language and literature has anything proportionate to the time spent on it to contribute to English studies. And when he writes 'For Anglo-Saxon studies some inclination for the acquisition of languages and a wider historical outlook are desirable, English studies are too limited in their scope', one is surprised to find the reader of *Scrutiny*.

acquiescing in the implied judgment on the type of mind to which English studies appeal

3 If we turn to direct consideration of the place of Anglo-Saxon in an English School, Chadwick's main contentions seem to be two-fold (1) the literary interest is 'not so great as to repay students of modern literature for the time they will have to spend in acquiring a sufficient mastery of the language to appreciate it', (2) that (as implied above) the proper way to study Anglo-Saxon is in the context of Germanic and Celtic antiquities. The first of these is an important point, in which it is perhaps fair to distinguish quality and quantity. Anyone who studies Anglo-Saxon with the hope of finding in it a really large body of literature conspicuously worth reading for its own sake would no doubt be disappointed, and in fact the specialist will go on to set his Anglo-Saxon in the context of the studies which Chadwick recommends, but I think that there is a strong case for saying that the relatively small body of work which the average literary student reads in his Anglo-Saxon studies is of considerable literary interest—Chadwick himself holds (*The Study of Anglo-Saxon*, p. 11) that 'a good deal of the literature is very interesting and attractive'—certainly enough to make it worth while if it also contributes to the profitable study of the later literature. This first contention of Chadwick's views are highly controversial—they are not an acknowledged axiom of Anglo-Saxon scholars, which they have agreed to keep dark in order to retain Anglo-Saxon in English syllabuses. Chadwick's views are intimately linked with his judgments on such matters as the relative importance of pagan and Christian elements in Anglo-Saxon poetry, and here, one would think, the literary student may have his contribution to make, and may, even if he is primarily a student of later literature, profit by addressing himself to the problems. There are certainly questions of literary criticism involved, and if the student of English leaves them severely alone it is not at all certain that they will be tackled at all. Your contributor *may* be right in suggesting that it is 'hypocritical pretence' to study *Beowulf* as 'great poetry', but one is hardly in a position to decide whether it is great poetry or not if one assumes that the only alternative to Chadwick's approach is to '“get up” Anglo-Saxon as a meaningless adjunct to mediaeval and modern English literature'. Note the begging of the question about continuity in Chadwick's favour in the assumption that *Beowulf* does not belong in any intelligible sense to mediaeval English literature. It would be a pity to concentrate on Chadwick's plea for the place of Anglo-Saxon in the study of the Heroic Age to such a degree as to ignore Professor Tolkien's equally eloquent plea (*Beowulf the Monsters and the Critics*) for attention to *Beowulf* as a poem. I do not say that this by any means established the case for compulsory Anglo-Saxon in English Schools, but I claim that it is rash to assume that *the* right way to treat *Beowulf* is as 'an interesting document'.

4 So we come back at last to the question of compulsion. This is not my main topic, and on balance my sympathies are with

the opponents of compulsion I think it ought to be possible to give Anglo-Saxon its place among a set of alternatives grouped round a nucleus of English studies. At the same time, I think both Chadwick and your contributors exaggerate the extent to which Anglo-Saxon is felt to be burdensome and unprofitable. I do not think it is just by dint of leading questions and intimidation that I elicit the view from a surprisingly high proportion of undergraduates whose main interest is in more recent literature that, while they found Anglo-Saxon irksome at first (and still feel that it takes up rather too much time), and which they would not have chosen it spontaneously, they find a genuine and distinctive interest in *Beowulf* at least. And this is not confined to those with a very marked scholarly bent. Chadwick's methods, your correspondent admits, 'assumed that the student had special aptitudes'. Well and good, but I think it is a mistake to assume that Anglo-Saxon studies are entirely useless except for students with such aptitudes, and, even for them, useless in the context of predominantly literary studies.

Yours sincerely,

J C MAXWELL

Dear Sirs,

To those of us who are more particularly concerned about the present state of the study of mediaeval English literature the appreciation of the late Professor Chadwick in the last number of *Scrutiny* was most inspiring. It not only testified to the ability of a great teacher to see (and so to inspire his pupils to discover) the meaning of a subject. It also emphasized in relation to what, in what context Anglo-Saxon studies may be discovered to have meaning. That context was not, for Professor Chadwick, English literature. His remarkable achievement therefore supports the feeling that Anglo-Saxon has been persistently, by an uncritical pressure, forced into the wrong context. In the context of the study of early European civilizations Anglo-Saxon comes to life. Into the organic whole which mediaeval and modern English literature combine to compose, Anglo-Saxon will not, however much we strain, fit naturally.

The recurrences of alliterative poetry in mediaeval English are frequently pointed to as evidence of its continuity with Anglo-Saxon. But the differences are much more radical than the resemblances. *Piers Plowman* and *Sir Gawain and the Grene Knight* are in their different ways poetry of a community which is already the English community of Shakespeare and Ben Jonson. The Anglo-Saxon world is by comparison a quite alien world, however we may stretch and strain to get it into line with Chaucer's and Shakespeare's. *Piers Plowman* and *Sir Gawain and the Grene Knight* are not accidentally contemporary with Chaucer, and have an immediate relevance for the student of English which Anglo-Saxon can hardly have. It is unlikely to be disputed that the great central core of the English tradition was created between

Chaucer and the eighteenth century By those generations the very existence of Anglo-Saxon poetry had been forgotten, whereas there was an extraordinary consciousness of Latin, French and Italian It is Latin, French and Italian that have the first claims to relevance for the serious student of English literature I have not been able to discern that the nineteenth-century boosting of Anglo-Saxon has made any appreciable difference to nineteenth- and twentieth-century literature

The intrinsic value of Anglo-Saxon poetry as poetry is in some dispute My own experience has been that the *Seafarer*, the *Wanderer*, some of Cynewulf and one or two of the *Riddles* have, as poetry, the enjoyment of their own peculiar character to offer But it may be very seriously doubted whether the time taken up in learning Anglo-Saxon on the chance of ultimately capturing the excitement of this novelty is time wisely taken away from students who are far from having yet mastered the central meanings of their own mind and civilization as presented in its supreme expressions My own impression is that in any one of the masterpieces of Shakespeare—*Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Measure for Measure*, *A Winter's Tale*, *The Tempest*—in any single one of these there is incomparably more meaning, demanding an incomparably greater exercising and disciplining of the mind for its apprehension, than in the whole of Anglo-Saxon literature put together

It may further be doubted whether the study at present known as Anglo-Saxon is at all compatible with a study the relevant discipline of which is the literary critical In practice the Anglo-Saxon specialist teacher and the philologist have hitherto nearly always been one Promises to treat in future Anglo-Saxon literature as literature may well be regarded with scepticism by whoever contemplates how firmly implanted is this philological habit in the teaching of Anglo-Saxon

Still, that is a relatively unimportant misfortune in comparison with the way in which the Anglo-Saxon specialist and philologist has been allowed to annex the study of mediaeval English literature—or, more exactly, to suppress it The result is that the student has now got to hack his way through a jungle of philological and other 'scholarly' irrelevance to get at our superb (and for students of English literature as a whole immediately relevant) mediaeval poetry at all The depressing technique is to interpose extrinsic points of 'interest' as obstacles between the student and the thing itself Attention is focussed on these external 'difficulties' Explanation is entirely explanation of them, never of the thing itself The whole trend of examinations in so-called Middle English and of editions of texts (the *raison d'être* of many of which appears to be merely to provide for the examinations) is to perpetuate this riveting of attention on these interposed obstacles and to distract attention from the meaning, which was the poet's own object and should be ours A glance at the London English Honours Degree Examination papers over the last ten or twenty years will confirm this It is typical how in these examinations Chaucer, who is as

central for mediaeval England as Dante is for mediaeval Italy, gets pushed into a corner as if no more important than the *Ormulum*

As for the editions of the texts, by no means the worst example is Tolkien and Gordon's barbarous edition of one of the supreme English poems, *Sir Gawain and the Grene Knight*. This is the edition in which young students are generally presented with this masterpiece. The deficiencies, confusions and inconsistencies of the copyist's spelling in the M. S. Cotton Nero IX are slavishly reproduced so that they are what first repel the eye and persistently distract the attention of the fresh reader. Nor is any inkling to be gained from the introduction or notes that here, at hand, is one of the supreme meanings in English. The meaning of a great poem being the most difficult thing in the world to grasp, why this interposition of external obstacles—unless indeed the meaning is felt to be a reality too disturbing to be borne, and to be evaded at all costs?

Middle English studies thus present as a whole the appearance of an elaborate irrelevance that is also an elaborate obscuration and evasion of meaning. These studies, tacked on as they have been in practice to Anglo-Saxon and Philology, have for long been known as 'linguistic' studies. In what sense is a study of language that is dissociated from a study of meanings—of what the words in conjunction do—a study of language at all? The study of language in action—of language meaning something—is literary criticism. The need is for literary criticism to undertake the direct rescue of our supremely valuable (and for us immediately relevant) mediaeval literature.

Yours sincerely,

REDBRICK

THE CRITICAL REVIEW TO-DAY

PROLEGOMENA TO A HISTORICAL INQUIRY

I

SHORTLY before the recent war *The Times Literary Supplement* published, under the title *Our Present Discontents*, a series of articles surveying the general state of letters in the contemporary world. Quoting from a variety of distinguished people in this country and abroad, the anonymous author showed that there was a widespread disquiet at the tendency for literature to become a large-scale industry. He reached the pessimistic conclusions that literature as an art or intellectual activity was dead or dying, that the standards of taste of a cultivated public had been submerged in the demands of the new reading masses for

entertainment and that there was now little inducement to write anything which did not answer this immediate purpose, or alternatively serve some non-literary cause (financial, political or ideological) Among other illustrations of these points, he instanced the decline of the serious literary periodical, pointing out that the demands of circulation (as a means to attract the advertisements on which periodicals increasingly depend) prevented even the most high-minded editor from doing much to improve the present state of letters—'a state that would have revolted Henley and appalled the great Croker' 'And with what feelings, he continued, can we in England, once the home and now the grave of the great reviews, read these words of M Duhamel?—

"The reviews are indispensable to the intellectual equilibrium of the countries that to-day guard our civilization. Continuity of thought, creative meditation, active study, can only be preserved with the help of the literary reviews that survive. The disappearance of even one review, just now, when intelligence is being restricted in its functions, would be a misfortune"

In the correspondence which followed these articles the state of reviewing and the literary periodical were discussed by Mr Jonathan Cape, from the point of view of the publisher, and by Mr J Middleton Murry from that of the man of letters. Mr Cape said that the reviewer and the editor were alike forced to consider the demands of a 'massive million public just able to read but not equipped to understand literature as a means of communication' at the same time he deplored the lack of general standards among reviewers—'they do not judge the handling of the theme, but address their task from some personal angle, moral, political, or whatever it may be' Mr Murry remarked on the almost complete disappearance of professional reviewing and estimated that since 1914 the market for serious criticism had diminished by at least three-quarters. The result was a dearth of criticism by which an author could profit.

'My first book, the work of a completely unknown author twenty-three years ago, received more substantial, positive and helpful criticism than did my last but one. At the outside I can reckon on the sustained attention of a half-dozen reviewers, and half of these will be unable, for lack of space, to say what they really want to say. Whether this indubitable decay of reviewing portends an absolute shrinkage in the critical audience for literature I cannot positively say. But it seems to me probable that it does. What seems to be established is that most of the people who do buy books no longer care to form their opinions from a comparative study of book-reviews'

The complaint that in our time the public for serious periodical literature has been small and has tended to grow smaller can be confirmed by a glance at the history of the chief literary reviews

and magazines since 1918

Of the old politico-literary quarterlies, *The Edinburgh* came to an end in 1929. *The Quarterly* has survived, with *The Fortnightly*, *The Contemporary* and *The Nineteenth Century and After*, but none of these can be said to count for much in criticism and their circulations are small. *The English Review* and *The National Review* became almost exclusively political, and joined forces shortly before the 1939 war. The older magazines carried on in much the same way as the reviews. *Blackwood's* and *The Cornhill* had long since become miscellanies mainly devoted to fiction, with no critical influence. (*The Cornhill* died in 1939, but was revived in 1944 under Mr Peter Quennell as a literary magazine somewhat similar to *Horizon*.)

Of the quarterlies and monthlies founded since 1918, few have reached more than a moderate circulation and most have had a hard struggle to survive. In general the more serious and severe in their critical standards have had the worst of it commercially. *The London Mercury*, founded in 1919 by Sir John (then Mr J. C.) Squire as a three-shilling monthly, was always catholic in its tastes and by no means high-brow. It reached at one time a circulation of 10,000, but in 1932 it was obliged to reduce its price to 1/- and plead for more regular subscribers. In 1934 it absorbed *The Bookman* (a popularizing magazine of *belles-lettres*, founded in the 'nineties) and the editorship passed to Mr R. A. Scott-James. By 1939 it had itself been absorbed by *Life and Letters To-day*, which still exists as a small monthly, the successor of the quarterly founded by Mr Desmond McCarthy in 1929. *The Adelphi*, founded by Mr J. Middleton Murry in 1923, reached a sale of about 4,000 as a shilling monthly; this dropped to 1,700 during the three years from 1927 to 1930 when it ran as a half-crown quarterly but rose again when it reverted to the monthly form. During the 'thirties it declined into a thin sixpenny monthly of rather less critical interest, and it has survived the war as a small-circulation subscription magazine. *The Criterion*, founded in 1922 by Mr T. S. Eliot on the model of the more substantial Continental reviews, appeared quarterly at 7/6, a price which considerably restricted its possible public. Despite its authority and the wide respect in which it was held, its circulation cannot have been large. Its change to the monthly form (1927-8) and back again suggests commercial difficulties. It came to an end in January, 1939. *The Calendar of Modern Letters*, whose brilliant life under Mr Edgell Rickword and Mr Douglas Garman lasted only from 1925 to 1928,¹ preferred

¹Its two and a half years, first as quarterly and then as monthly, yielded, besides the volume of selections *Towards Standards of Criticism*, edited by F. R. Leavis, *A pamphlet against Anthologies* by Laura Riding and Robert Graves, *Anonymity* by E. M. Forster, part of *Transition*, by Edwin Muir, and the two volumes of *Scrutinies*, edited by Edgell Rickword. It also published some of D. H. Lawrence's best short stories and criticism.

to give up from lack of support rather than continue on a subsidized basis or sacrifice its independence by adopting a political programme. *Scrutiny*, an independent critical review with explicit educational interests, has appeared quarterly since 1932. It has been able to draw on the livelier members of the academic and teaching world for both supporters and contributors, but its circulation is small,² and its economic position may be gauged from the announcement in the first number that no payment would be made for contributions. Among the few other periodicals (other than weeklies) in which one could hope to find serious criticism during the 'thirties, and which did not survive the war, may be mentioned *Purpose* and the Catholic *Colosseum Arena*, run by a group which broke away from *The Colosseum*, appeared for only four numbers. It is true that among those still with us there is *Horizon*, founded in 1939, but although it has occasionally published critical essays of note, *Horizon* has no great authority and no clear critical policy, while its review section is small. Similar comments might be made on *New Writing*, which has achieved a high circulation in its Penguin form.

The weeklies show the same developments: the best of them disappeared from lack of support or were able to survive only by amalgamation with inferior papers. In 1919 there were at least six weeklies publishing criticism of a high standard: *The Spectator*, *The Nation*, *The Saturday Review*, *The New Statesman*, *The Athenaeum* and *The New Age*. It is perhaps significant that the first to succumb was the purely literary organ, *The Athenaeum*, after a brilliant two years from 1919 to 1921 under the editorship of Mr. Murry.³ But in 1921 *The Athenaeum* became merely a department of *The Nation*, and in 1930 *The Nation* itself was absorbed by *The New Statesman*. Meanwhile *The Saturday Review* had been succeeded by *The Week-end Review* which ran from 1930 to 1934 under Mr. Gerald Barry until it, too, was taken over by *The New Statesman*, which thus stands in the place of four earlier journals. To-day *The New Statesman* and *The Spectator* practically divide the weekly field between them: there are also

²[The sale is small, the circulation much wider. Owing to the dearth of paper we are able at present to print only 1000 copies of each issue. There is a long queue of would-be subscribers, and shop-sales have to be restricted to virtual insignificance. We have good reason for believing that the total sale could be multiplied by four or five immediately.—Editors]

³During these two years it published many of the essays subsequently reprinted in Professor Santayana's *Soliloquies in England*, Mr. Murry's *Aspects of Literature*, Mr. Eliot's *The Sacred Wood*, and Roger Fry's *Vision and Design*. At the same time it kept a vigilant eye on contemporary work: no modern weekly reviewer subjects the younger writers to the kind of scrutiny directed by Mr. Murry upon the Georgian poets or by Katherine Mansfield upon the novelists of the day.

Time and Tide and *The New English Weekly*, a successor to *The New Age*, but these are less influential, and even if we add the B B C's *The Listener*, which is only incidentally literary, the sum total of critical weeklies hardly equals in weight and effectiveness that of 1919. *The Times Literary Supplement* continues, of course, and largely from the fact that it provides a list of almost all published works and is therefore indispensable to booksellers and the academic world, it reaches (or reached fifteen years ago—I take the figure from *Fiction and the Reading Public*) a sale of over 30,000. But it is a less serious critical journal than in 1919. For a time after its change of format in the 'thirties it cultivated a more popular manner, with shorter reviews and a greater proportion of mere literary gossip. More recently it has tended to revert towards its earlier solidity. As for the low-priced literary weeklies of the type of *John o' London's*, these are not merely popular in manner, popularization being their avowed aim, but their tendency is hardly to combat anti-'highbrow' prejudice.

'When I enumerate the periodicals that I read regularly, and the opinions of which I take seriously', wrote Mr. Eliot in one of the last numbers of *The Criterion*, 'I find that with the exception of *The Times* they are all periodicals of considerably smaller circulation than either *The Spectator* or *The New Statesman*'. So far as culture depends upon periodicals it depends on periodicals which do not make a profit'.⁴ To-day, in fact, it is no longer possible to assume a substantial public for serious criticism, and a literary periodical has to begin by rallying the public that it believes to be potentially available. Alternatively it becomes the representative of a small group more or less out of touch with other groups and with any common centre of critical opinion, kept together only by some non-literary allegiance, political, economic, psychological, philosophical, or of some more eccentric nature. The present tendency towards a proliferation of little reviews, magazines and miscellanies representing groups of this kind is not merely the effect of wartime restrictions, it had been growing for several years before 1939, as can be seen from Mr. Denys Val Baker's survey, *Little Reviews 1919-1943*. It is not, of course, that all these publications are devoid of merit, or that some of them do not include genuine criticism upon occasion, but taken as a whole they are symptomatic of the disintegration of the literary public into

⁴In the last days of *The Athenaeum* Mr. Murry had commented that a journal devoting considerable space to criticism of the highest quality could not command 'the enormous circulation necessary in order that the advertisement rates may be advanced automatically *pari passu* with the increased expenditure. It is an unfortunate fact that the number of people who will pay, say, twopence a week solely for criticism which they consider good is at the outside about fifty thousand. If it costs one shilling a week the figures would drop immediately to the neighbourhood of 10,000'.

a number of coteries acknowledging no common standards and possessing no common critical language. The serious literary periodical to-day cannot hope for any great influence or authority and has for the most part a hard struggle to survive.

If the commercial difficulties of the literary periodical at the present day are simple matter of fact, there is equal evidence of an associated decline in the standard of reviewing. The article by Mr Eliot quoted above (which appeared just before the discussion in the *Times Literary Supplement*) doubted whether good criticism was compatible with commercial success.

'I question whether, in these days, the highest level of criticism can be hoped for in periodicals of more than a very small circulation. Beyond a point, the deterioration is first apparent by the inclusion of books not worth reviewing; later, in the quality of the reviews themselves. I am speaking, of course, not of the highest level of the best reviewer, but of the general standard of a periodical. And I doubt whether a high standard can be expected from any paper to which the popularity of its reviews is of commercial importance.'

In 1939 Virginia Woolf devoted a pamphlet to the subject, concluding that criticism and reviewing had diverged so widely that the modern reviewer had ceased to have any real value either to the author or to the public. She went so far as to advocate his abolition in favour of a system of professional critical consultants, and suggested that this might lead to a new relationship between author and critic.

But complaints about the state of reviewing were frequent long before 1939. In 1921 we find A. C. Clutton-Brock beginning an article in *The Nation and Athenaeum*⁵ with the blunt statement: 'I am writing to say in print what all writers assume in private, that most reviews are worthless, and what some may deny, that they are growing worse with the general deterioration of the Press'. The incompetence and futility of the newspaper reviews, he said, were affecting criticism in periodicals of more serious pretensions. In the previous year *The Athenaeum* had published several articles on the subject, including a leader deploring the growing shyness of critical severity⁶ and a complaint from Mr Swinnerton⁷ of the 'enforced disingenuousness of modern reviewing' ('One may not explicitly say in any paper, for example, until he is dead, that a writer is an inefficient writer'). Mr Murry himself wrote on the economic difficulties of the reviewer.⁸ He pointed out that the smaller space given to literature in the daily and weekly press had reduced the reviewer's possible income, while the increase in the number

⁵February 19th, 1921, p. 692

⁶*The Critics' New Year*, August 27th, 1920, p. 261

⁷*The Difficulties of Criticism*, May 21st, 1920, p. 661

⁸*The Economics of It*, March 12th, 1920, p. 329

of books to be dealt with caused his work to deteriorate 'The book reviewer', he said, 'is being crushed out of existence, and the longer he survives the worse will his work become' ⁹ This judgment was corroborated by Mr Swinnerton some years later in his *Authors and the Book Trade* ¹⁰ 'It is work from which a man who does nothing but reviewing cannot possibly derive an adequate income. The consequence is that the ordinary reviewer is usually either a hack or an amateur' Elsewhere in the same book a more serious charge is made

'The greatest obstacle, I think, to sincere and disinterested reviewing in this as in other countries is what may be indicated as the dinner-party habit. Literary freemasonries are the devil

When, at a dinner-party, a reviewer meets an author, a false relationship is at once established. Most London reviewers are themselves authors. In the same way, the author met at dinner is likely to be a reviewer. If he has been praised, he will be affable to the praiser, if blamed or ignored, his sensitiveness is such that he may use the weapon that comes nearest to his hand—another, and retaliatory, review. Thus are feuds manufactured. Not only that, but the feud may extend to gang warfare'

Mr Swinnerton accused the literary weeklies of being dominated by a coterie system which was 'propagandist, partial and mean'. These comments are to be accepted as those of a successful man of letters writing from a point of view in no sense 'highbrow' or Utopian. A comment typical of the attitude of critics accustomed to judge from the severest standards may be seen in Mr B. L. Higgins's article in *The Calendar* on *Euthanasia, or the Future of Criticism* ¹¹

'Everybody realizes that, with the increase in the popularization of literature, its dissemination comes under the same control, economic and political, that governs the distribution of foodstuffs. With few exceptions, only with varying degrees of compromise, the journals concerned follow the commercial necessity of deferring about their choice of review books, about the length—and often the tone—of the reviews, to the neighbouring columns of publishers' advertisements. The integrity of individual criticism, of course, does not suffer directly from the mechanism to which it ministers, though the usual literary supplement has no right to the title it boasts, since the non-literary design to which the parts are subordinate is bound to violate the proper literary proportions, and the purely receptive

⁹Even so optimistic an observer as Mr Gerald Gould admitted in his contribution to *The Book World* (1935) that a great deal of reviewing was now a non-remunerative trade.

¹⁰Published in 1935.

¹¹Reprinted in *Towards Standards of Criticism*, p. 160.

reader carries away a wrong general impression, a false lesson in values. Perhaps a more noteworthy result of the popularizing mechanism is its effect on the critic-popularizer. From Dryden to Jeffrey and from Jeffrey to Mr. Squire, are two big jumps, and the conclusion cannot be avoided that the literary representatives of the people degenerate as the constituency increases.

The real corrupters of literary criticism are the Mensheviks of our transitional period. This attitude takes various forms and covers a large area of very respectable print. Its distinguishing marks are a confusion of social with literary qualities, a hatred of unqualified statements, a hunger for "personal touches", an ambition to extend a welcome to "all sorts" of writing, ostensibly out of a desire for comprehensiveness, really with the motive to justify a mixed standard, finally an over-insistence on the empirical nature of our present aesthetic judgments.

The process of popularizing referred to here produced the star-reviewer system associated especially with the name of Arnold Bennett. As the newspapers came to exploit more and more the vast public of the half-educated masses, they at first cut down the space given to criticism, but they discovered later that books could be news and that reviewing could easily be assimilated to the process of Giving the Public what it Wants. In a vein of hearty forthrightness Bennett communicated his opinions and prejudices to the readers of *The Evening Standard* to such effect that he could make a best-seller overnight of a book which had until then been almost unnoticed.¹² The system soon spread to other newspapers, with the obvious result that this kind of reviewing became more and more a matter of anticipating the tastes and flattering the prejudices of a large half-educated public indifferent to traditional critical standards. The proprietors of newspapers and the publishers who advertised in them were not concerned with the protests of 'high-brow' critics at the general levelling-down of taste: no such considerations were necessary to complete the commercial cycle. It is therefore not surprising that reviewers became more and more assimilated into this scheme and that their work grew increasingly similar to ordinary journalism and advertisement copywriting, with the same spurious liveliness and meaningless superlatives.

A typical protest against the system appears in Mr. Wyndham Lewis's *Men Without Art*, published in the middle 'thirties:

'That highly paid experts should (with gloves on and heavily masked) examine these masses of written matter weekly and appropriately report upon them in a newspaper no one could object to: if they said "This is the goods, you will like *this*" all would be well. It is when people possessing, rightly or wrongly,

¹²See the account of the sales of Miss Phoebe Fenwick Gaye's *Vivandière*, for example, quoted from *The Evening Standard* in *For Continuity*, by F. R. Leavis, p. 26.

a great position in the literature of their very important country, are employed, at portentous salaries, to write weekly about these products in the way that they do—lavishing upon them all the resources of their critical vocabularies—a vocabulary acquired for the appraisement of such tremendous works as *War and Peace*, or *L'Education Sentimentale*, that there is something that stinks horribly in the State of Denmark and that it is more than time to call a halt

The star system in its true form declined during the years immediately before the 1939 war, but it can hardly be said that there was any improvement in the standard of reviewing as a whole. As Clutton-Brock had prophesied earlier, the debasement of critical currency affected periodicals of more serious literary pretensions. The war brought many modifications, especially in the form of restrictions on the space of both reviews and advertisements, but the situation to-day is very much what it was in 1939 when Mr. Eliot and Mrs. Woolf made their protests and *The Times Literary Supplement* published its pessimistic survey.

One correspondent who took exception to this pessimism made the typical objection that the present state of affairs was really no worse than that prevailing at any time in the past. The author of *Our Present Discontents* had referred to the great reviews of the nineteenth century. Mr. G. B. Harrison retorted by instancing their notorious critical mistakes.

'When we remember how Wordsworth, Shelley and Keats were received by the guardians of "true standards" we need not share the pessimism of your correspondent that literature will soon be extinct. Nor need we take him too seriously.

In his J. M. Dent Memorial Lecture for 1939, *The Reviewing and Criticism of Books*, Mr. Swinnerton took up a somewhat similar position. It is the business of historical inquiry to answer the question whether the present state of reviewing and the critical periodical is abnormal or not, and to examine the evidence for the contention that things were always much the same.

II

THE IDEA OF A LITERARY PERIODICAL

It is characteristic of the state of affairs outlined above that the modern critic can take very little for granted. He is continually driven to discuss fundamental problems which call for solution before he can begin his specific task. It is hardly surprising, therefore, to find that the founders of serious periodicals during the last thirty years have devoted much thought to the ideal function of the literary review. A consideration of some of their manifestos and statements of policy may help to establish some agreed common principles.

Writing in *The Criterion* for July, 1923, Mr Eliot asserted that a review 'should maintain the application, in literature, of principles which have their consequences also in politics and private conduct and it should maintain them without tolerating any confusion of the purposes of pure literature with the purposes of politics or ethics' A more extended discussion in the first number of *The New Criterion* (January, 1926) pointed out that a review must be more than a miscellany, and underlined its representative function

'A review which depends merely on its editor's vague conception of good and bad has manifestly no critical value A review should be an organ of documentation That is to say, the bound volumes of a decade should represent the development of the keenest sensibility and the clearest thought of ten years'

It should not, on the other hand, simply propagate the ideas of one man or of a small group The ideal is a tendency (rather than a programme) residual from the play of the individual opinions of the editor and contributors The material included should be neither too miscellaneous nor governed by too narrow a conception of literature it must deal with 'what we may suppose to be the interests of any person with literary tastes' Above all, the literary review 'must protect its disinterestedness, must avoid the temptation ever to appeal to any social, political or theological prejudices' A year later the function of the review as a vehicle for opinion was further stressed—'Not for the haphazard opinion of a miscellaneous group of writers, or for the opinion of an individual or for the drilled opinion of a school or order, but for the various, divergent, or even contradictory opinion of a widening group of individuals in communication' The first number of the monthly series (May, 1927) spoke of aiming to revive some of the 'leisure, ripeness and thoroughness' of the quarterly reviews of a hundred years ago, together with 'another of their characteristics, a certain corporate personality which had almost disappeared from contemporary journalism' on the reversion to the quarterly form (June, 1928) there was a note on the need for conscious opposition to modern reading habits—'if the quarterly review seems obsolete to the popular mind, that is perhaps a sign that the quarterly review is more needed now than ever, and that it is ahead of the times rather than behind them Something should surely be provided for those minds which are still capable of attention, thought and feeling, as well as for those who turn to a literary review as they would glance at the picture-page or social column of a daily paper

The Calendar of Modern Letters began by deprecating any preconceived statement of policy, remarking that the readers of a paper have a share in the formation of its individuality There may be at first some ideal reader in mind (not necessarily one with whom the editors share any particular set of admirations or beliefs) but 'as this hypothesis is corrected by the reality, the balance is

adjusted into an unpredictable harmony' Critical severity was an explicit aim of *The Calendar*, and it invoked a tradition assumed to be still at least potentially alive

'In reviewing we shall base our statements on the standards of criticism, since it is only then that one can speak plainly without offence, or give praise with meaning'

Like *The Criterion*, *The Calendar* looked back with respect to the reviews of a century before

'There is no longer a body of opinion so solid as that represented by *The Quarterly*, *The Edinburgh* and *Blackwood's*. The fact that they pronounced a vigorous aesthetic creed, and were, therefore, of the greatest benefit to a lively interest in poetry, is forgotten because they were sometimes ungently

The editors of *The Calendar*, that is, conceived its function as the re-creation, on however small a scale, of some comparable body of opinion, it was to be a centre round which a public acknowledging common standards might be rallied, the expression of a truly contemporary sensibility, and a focus of resistance to the prevailing cultural disintegration. The *Valediction* of the last number said that the obvious step for a periodical wishing to survive was to adopt a 'political' attitude—'one, that is, which implies a tendency to judge by expediency'—and gave as the reason for refusing this step that it would mean the loss of freedom to exercise an independent judgment on contemporary work

'The value of a review must be judged by its attitude to the living literature of the time (which includes such works of the past as can be absorbed by the contemporary sensibility) and there should naturally be some homogeneity of view among the more regular contributors'

The question remained, however, whether this homogeneity was something vital and real or merely the acceptance of a body of dogma or of the prejudices of one superior mind. Judged by this ideal standard the editors of *The Calendar* did not claim to be free from censure

A similar preoccupation with the problem of bringing together a public sharing common standards appears in the manifesto published in the first number of *Scrutiny*. Assuming that 'the general dissolution of standards is a commonplace' and taking it as axiomatic that 'concern for standards of living implies concern for standards in the arts', the editors asserted that the first duty was 'to publish good criticism judiciously directed'

'And inseparable from this is a conscious critical policy if anything is to be effected in the present state of culture. For to-day there are anti-highbrow publics and "modernist" publics, but there is no public of Common Readers with whom the critic can rejoice to concur'

Scrutiny was to provide a focus of intellectual interests, a means of organizing the scattered minority 'for whom the arts are something more than a luxury product', who believe 'that there is a necessary relationship between the quality of the individual's response to art and his general fitness for a humane existence'

These statements of policy are concerned with the special difficulties of the critical periodical in the modern world, but they point towards an ideal function of which it may be valuable to attempt some general summary. In a nation-wide reading public the critical review should provide a focus of critical discussion—that 'current of ideas in the highest degree animating and nourishing to the creative power' which Arnold desiderated as the necessary condition of a healthy culture and which formerly existed in the conversation and personal contacts of a small and compact society.¹³ It must be a clearing-house of opinion for a body of readers all showing a disinterested concern for 'the pursuit of true judgment' and a knowledge of 'the best that is known and thought in the world'. There will be room for individual estimates of works and authors to differ widely, but from the exchange and interplay of opinion certain common assumptions will emerge which it is the function of the periodical to express. It must define and make explicit the principles and standards more or less consciously acknowledged by its public, and reciprocally it must apply them consistently in making its judgments. The true application of critical standards is of course no mere mechanical use of a foot-rule, but rather the process of establishing, through discussion, the relation of a new work to the living tradition.¹⁴ There will no doubt be a constant risk of lapsing into dogmatism in the formulation of standards. It is a risk that must be taken, though the intelligent critic will minimize it by preserving a disinterested sensitiveness in his response to new work. As a writer in *The Calendar* put it, 'the characteristics of a healthy criticism are invariably "classic"', tending towards an ever greater rigidity of principle,

¹³The gatherings of people in Athens for conversation, the courts of Renaissance Italy, the French salons, and the lively intercourse of *honnêtes gens*, the kind of life which existed in Lord Falkland's country house, are different forms of the one ideal, an effort to realize an intense but widely interested intellectual life. When there are enough of such people to make the coterie spirit impossible, literature has at once its purpose, its tribunal and its most profound stimulus'. —Note on *Literature and the 'Honnête Homme'* *The Criterion*, I, 422

¹⁴'The existing order is complete before the new work arrives, for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the whole existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered, and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art towards the whole are re-adjusted and this is conformity between the old and the new' —*Tradition and the Individual Talent*, T. S. Eliot, *Selected Essays*,

organizations more explicit, and the canalization of the wide, shallow stream of taste' Ideally, then, the literary review helps both to build up and to preserve a critical tradition At the same time it has an educational function, that of extending the public capable of recognizing its standards and of converting general goodwill into conscious understanding of the questions at issue

It must be able to command the services of responsible and authoritative critics, and clearly these will need to be sufficiently well-paid for commercial or other considerations not to hamper them in the performance of their task Independence is an obvious necessity both in the review as a whole and in the individual writers This suggests another main function of the literary periodical, that of giving employment to the unknown aspirant to letters, providing him with a regular career or at least a temporary market until he has made his name

It will help the young writer further by supplying at once a stimulus and a check, providing on the one hand the encouragement of a centre of literary interests and ideas, on the other a critical resistance, something to push against, so that even if he openly revolts against contemporary critical authority because it has become too rigidly 'classic' he will be driven to define his position more consciously and with greater care

In any large and complex society there must inevitably be a variety of different periodicals approaching from different angles and stressing different interests and preoccupations Given a normally healthy culture the exchange of ideas between these different groups would contribute to a general centre of consensus in a similar manner to the play of individual opinion within the groups This, needless to say, is a very different thing from the mere existence side by side of a number of different coteries, each self-contained and exclusive

Can we say that the critical periodical in the past has ever approximated to this ideal, or approached it more closely than at present? What justification is there for regarding the nineteenth century as in some sense a Golden Age of reviewing? Are the harassed modern editors who cast envious eyes upon the power and authority of the great Regency quarterlies deluding themselves by forgetting the frequent abuse of that power? What part, in fact, did the critical periodical play in the century following the foundation of the *Edinburgh*? Historical inquiry can supply pretty decisive answers to these questions

R G Cox

THE NOVEL AS DRAMATIC POEM (II)

‘WUTHERING HEIGHTS’

‘The gigantic ambition is to be felt throughout the novel—a struggle half thwarted but of superb conviction, to say something through the mouths of her characters which is not merely “I love” or “I hate” but “we, the whole human race” and “you, the eternal powers” the sentence remains unfinished’ (Virginia Woolf)

I

IF *Wuthering Heights* does not represent the coherence of a *Macbeth*, it is important to remember that the novel is the first in English which invites the same kind of attention that we give to *Macbeth*. It has a similar complexity, makes the same claim as poetry. Not only because the novelist’s method is dramatic, but because the status of the language, the seriousness of the purposes for which it is used are those of poetry. As an Elizabethan play stands or falls by the quality of the poetry at its crises of meaning, so *Wuthering Heights* may be said to justify itself by the quality of some half-dozen or so speeches of Catherine’s and Heathcliff’s which are as direct and as highly organized in word and rhythm as poetry. In such speeches the novel establishes the reality of its subject matter. And the subject matter of *Wuthering Heights* is a way of feeling about man’s place in the universe. This is also the subject matter of *Cold in the earth*.

One can read *Wuthering Heights*, as one reads *Cold in the earth*, without questioning the seriousness of situations so poignantly and strongly presented. The quality of achievement from chapter to chapter is so consistent that it establishes as much unity and interconnection as the common reader requires. We are reminded repeatedly of that fine control of feeling which distinguishes Emily Brontë’s best known poem.

‘“Come in! Come in!” he sobbed. “Cathy, do come. Oh do—once more! Oh! my heart’s darling! hear me *this* time, Catherine, at last!”’

Her italics, far from being obtrusive, are usually as much in place as the stress in a line of poetry, and suggest a vivid exactness in what she wishes to do. There are not many things in the book which one reads with reservations and those are a few passages in which the intensity and repetition are felt to be static, adjectival and insistent rather than an enrichment, felt to be rather mechanical.

‘“You talk of her mind being unsettled. How the devil could it be otherwise in her frightful isolation? And that insipid,

paltry creature attending her from duty and humanity! From pity and charity! He might as well plant an oak in a flower-pot and expect it to thrive, as imagine he can restore her to vigour in the soil of his shallow cares",

There is more mere raillery in this than was probably intended the analogy is literary and too deliberate So too, the whole speech in Chapter XV which contains the following syllogism 'I have not broken your heart you have broken it, and in breaking it you have broken mine' And in one of the key passages in the novel, Catherine's 'I *am* Heathcliff!' is an assertion that needs the rest of the book to justify it or at least to make it acceptable For, again, that speech has more resonance, more overtone, than (one must surmise) was intended¹ It balances between the passionate assertion of love, and an attempt to state the meaning of living Catherine's attitude to Heathcliff is, indeed, the main subject of the book, and it is an exceedingly complex knot of feelings, of attachments, of loyalties, of intensities—and Heathcliff is plainly not an adequate object for them all After Catherine's death, Heathcliff has to be made to explain and to represent his own significance, and his declarations of feeling towards the vanished Catherine are usually closer to those of a mere lover The feelings of Catherine towards Heathcliff are different from his towards her, and her feelings are more than feelings towards him They are feelings towards life and death, Wuthering Heights, the universe On her deathbed she cries

' "That is not *my* Heathcliff I shall love mine yet and take him with me he's in my soul And" she added musingly, "the thing that irks me most is this shattered prison, after all I'm tired of being enclosed here I'm wearying to escape into that glorious world, and to be always there not seeing it dimly through tears and yearning for it through the walls of an aching heart, but really with it and in it" '

Recent accounts of the novel have tended to smooth over many of the difficulties, to make it more of a work of art than it is, to make more completely separate than they were, the woman who suffered and the woman who created She appears to have striven

¹*Cp* her interesting poem (No 738 in the *Oxford Book*) in which the echo 'cease to be' occurs

Though earth and man were gone,
And suns and universes cease to be,
And thou wert left alone
Every existence would exist in thee

The poem has a similar resonance, points too insistently Notice too Catherine's 'should be' in 'I cannot express it, but surely you and everybody have a notion that there is or should be an existence of yours beyond you'

to make as clear an object as she could, and there are few more impersonal novels in English. Yet the 'I' is present not in omniscient comment, but in a phrase, a rhythm, that is 'deeper' than 'work of art' suggests. There is a serious idiosyncrasy in the point of view as in the word 'solid' in the line 'Oh that this too too solid flesh would melt'. It represents another level of sincerity than that of the staple prose.

This is partly the explanation of much dislike of the novel. Another cause of misunderstanding is the absence of anything one could confidently name a moral. The 'structure' of the novel is firmly there as one reads. But it is not a moral tale. The author's preferences are not shown², do not reveal themselves unambiguously even to analysis. Not a comment refers back to the author. In the world of *Wuthering Heights* good and bad are not applicable terms. The author appears to say—'That is one kind of person. They live long, more contentedly, accepting and giving affection freely. But these others are also possible and necessary, to whom common standards hardly apply. To these life is not a submission to time, a round of gentleness and enjoyment and love. They were born to live more keenly, to suffer the claims of feelings more keenly, and to die young. They were neither wise nor good but selfish, wilful and violent. They were not content'.

The end of the novel is a comparative calm but it is not the calm of

So, thanks to all at once, and to each one
Whom we invite to see us crowned at Scone

Fine as the last brief paragraph in the novel is, it does not come from the omniscient author nor yet from Nelly Dean, but from the foreigner Lockwood, in whose lips it has a certain ambiguity, placed as it is after the little shepherd boy's vision of 'Heathcliff and a woman, yonder, under t'Nab'. So that one reads the last sentence uncertain which word, if any, to stress.

²Even Linton Heathcliff is not a complete wretch. The following, for example, connects him with an idea of *Mour* not irrelevant to the main themes of the novel. He is a born victim. 'You are so much happier than I am, you ought to be better. Papa talks enough of my defects, and shows enough scorn of me, to make it natural I should doubt myself. I doubt whether I am not altogether as worthless as he calls me, frequently, and then I feel so cross and bitter, I hate everybody! I *am* worthless, and bad in temper, and bad in spirit, almost always, and, if you choose, you *may* say good-bye you'll get rid of an annoyance. Only, Catherine, do me this justice: believe that if I might be as sweet, and as kind, and as good as you are, I would be, and believe that your kindness has made me love you deeper than if I deserved your love and though I couldn't, and cannot help showing my nature to you, I regret it and repent it, and shall regret and repent it till I die!' 'I felt he spoke the truth'.

' "I lingered round them under that benign sky watched the moths fluttering among the heath and hare-bells, listened to the soft wind breathing through the grass, and wondered how anyone could ever imagine unquiet slumbers for the sleepers in that quiet earth'

Each of the words 'anyone' 'could' 'ever' 'imagine' and 'unquiet' appears to invite an intonation which would modify the meaning. Irony is not excluded. It is probably an evasion to read the sentence in a monotone. It is more of a question than an assertion.³

The tranquillity of the ending of *Wuthering Heights* is indeed an ambiguous tranquillity. For young Cathy and Hareton are different people, one might say lesser people, than Catherine and Heathcliff. They represent the reinstatement of the Earnshaws. But the deaths of Catherine and Heathcliff, of Edgar and Hindley, Frances and Isabella and Linton, are not 'justified' by the union of Cathy and Hareton. The ownership of the Heights is not a main issue. The main interest is in the quality of life lived by the chief actors, the quality of suffering they inflict on one another, and of their attitudes to life and death. No amount of interpretation of the Cathy-Hareton courtship will yield a moral order by which to judge all that has taken place. There is no lysis, only a lull. Nelly Dean will go on sitting 'with a fist on either knee', seeing yet not seeing. Joseph 'hale and sinewy' will go on labouring and praying, as indestructible and as unhelpful as a twisted thorn. Lockwood will return to 'devastate the moors', always escaping lightly, frequently 'over head and ears' to his 'fascinating creatures' and 'goddesses', yet remaining unattached. And Cathy and Hareton, though of Earnshaw stock and heirs to that blood, are young. The conclusion of the novel is diagrammatic. There is no solution, no assurance that, should another stranger intrude, it would not all happen again. The love of Cathy and Hareton does not 'place' the feeling between Hindley and Frances, between Catherine and Edgar, Catherine and Heathcliff, Hindley and Edgar and Heathcliff, is no comment on it. The most one can say is that the ending does not conflict with the main themes, that the book can be read and re-read in its entirety although the main themes do seem to aim at a more serious and ambitious statement. All the themes are given continuity by Mrs. Dean's natural affection, the consistency of the moors themselves and the weathered obstinate permanence of Joseph.

The main problems in any account of the novel are these: to decide on the status of Catherine and her relationship with Edgar

³*Cp* chapter XVI. Nelly, after recounting Catherine's death, says 'Do you believe such people *are* happy in the other world, sir?' 'I'd give a great deal to know'. Lockwood evades her with 'I declined to answer Mrs. Dean's question, which struck me as something heterodox'.

and Heathcliff to decide on the status of Heathcliff and his relationship with Catherine, Hindley and the Lintons to decide on the status of the Cathy-Hareton relationship and the appropriateness of reading it as a comment on what has happened earlier

II

It is perhaps not being too trite to say that Emily Bronte differs from Jane Austen in that she attempts to establish her own view of the world rather than to describe the behaviour of people within a given pattern. In this she is potentially more important, has the importance of Lawrence. Her novel is set deliberately outside society, in relation to the 'universe' as represented by the spaces of *Wuthering Heights*. Yet it depends for its effect on the narration of the story by two representatives of different grades of normality—Lockwood (the town) and Nelly Dean (the sensible, motherly countrywoman). These two live entirely within their worlds, their commentaries represent different levels of understanding or misunderstanding of the Catherine-Heathcliff relationship. They are a means of defining it, so that we see it through vistas of narrative and reported dialogue. The author begins at the end, and in a series of swift episodes (which include Lockwood's dreams) tangles us at once in the feelings of the novel.

Though Catherine employs the word 'love' to describe her affection both for Edgar and Heathcliff, the words 'loyalty', 'fidelity', 'constancy' seem more applicable to her feelings for the latter. Heathcliff, the waif, whose only claim on life is his hold on it, his fierce resistance to extinction, is introduced into an ancient family of which the male heir (Hindley) is rather spoilt and aimless, and the daughter is a spirited creature who recognizes a necessary selfish vitality in the gypsy. The daughter is the real heir to the family blood which had survived centuries of life on *Wuthering Heights*. She grows up in a close childish intimacy with the gypsy, which was at times almost a defensive confederacy against the harshness of Hindley and old Joseph. They often hid 'snug in the arch of the dresser'. They were the 'unfriended creatures', frequently thrashed by Joseph. Catherine marries Edgar Linton, preferring love, attentiveness and comfort to any possible relationship with Heathcliff. She is genuinely in love with Edgar. 'I love the ground under his feet, and the air over his head, and everything he touches, and every word he says. I love all his looks, and all his actions, and him entirely and altogether'. She speaks gaily, rather prettily of it. Life with Edgar would be delightful, graceful, amusing. Yet paradoxically she answers Nelly's question 'Have you considered how you'll bear the separation (from Heathcliff) and how he'll bear to be quite deserted in the world?' with indignant seriousness.

' "He quite deserted! we separated! Who is to separate us pray? They'll meet the fate of Milo! Not as long as I live Ellen for no mortal creature. Every Linton on the face of the

earth might melt into nothing, before I could consent to forsake Heathcliff Oh, that's not what I intend—that's not what I mean! I shouldn't be Mrs Linton were such a price demanded! He'll be as much to me as he has been all his lifetime''

Her feelings towards Heathcliff are not 'love' Though later in the novel Heathcliff accuses her of betrayal of her deeper instincts there is no suggestion in the novel that her choice is condemned It is not suggested that a marriage with Heathcliff would have been possible in any sense Catherine's feelings for Heathcliff represent a recognition of something valuable in him, a quality of experience, of suffering, which exacts from both a loyalty, a stubborn violent sincerity The loyalty is to a vision of life, that vision of life which made for survival on the indifferent moors, the moors being the essential scene It is this loyalty which makes their behaviour, as Lawrence says, 'bare and stark, lacking any of the graces of sentiment' The violence of their behaviour when they are reunited is an assertion of the importance of other ties, unthwarted by social compromises Edgar shows himself quite unable to understand the nature of their relationship Heathcliff says 'You must forgive me for I struggled only for you' And Edgar 'Catherine, unless we are to have cold tea' Edgar's reception of Heathcliff is perfectly civil and friendly But addressed to Heathcliff, such phrases as 'recalling old times' and 'a cordial reception' are felt to be ironically inappropriate 'Heathcliff dropped his slight hand' Edgar does his best but fails to understand That night he 'began to cry' Yet we are never invited to approve of or sympathize completely with Catherine The oddity of her behaviour is clearly stated by Nelly and so is Edgar's rather conventional point of view The conflict which Catherine endures is not a conflict of 'loves'

' "No! I tell you, I have such faith in Linton's love, that I believe I might kill him, and he wouldn't wish to retaliate"

I advised her to value him the more for his affection

"I do," she answered "But he needn't resort to whining for trifles"

Catherine's married life with Edgar had been happy 'I believe I may assert that they were really in possession of deep and growing happiness' But—"the gunpowder lay as harmless as sand"

' "It ended Well, we *must* be for ourselves in the long run the mild and generous are only more justly selfish than the domineering, and it ended when circumstances caused each to feel that the one's interest was not the chief consideration in the other's thoughts"

The return of Heathcliff is clearly a test for Linton Heathcliff is reintroduced in a symbolic scene He is an intruder in the quiet garden, amid the apples and the soft sweet air, against the reflection of a score of glittering moons in the Grange windows The test is of the compatibility of the Linton view of life and the

vision evoked by the return of Heathcliff. Edgar accuses her of 'welcoming a runaway servant as a brother'. Indeed that is more the quality of their relationship—one of kin rather than of lovers. Heathcliff is a brother in suffering, in quality of experience. Her love for him is a love of his spirit, his tenacity, his struggles, his refusal to be obliterated. Her loyalty is to her sense of connectedness with him. 'I *am* Heathcliff!' For both of them life had a certain quality which the sociable world ignored or slighted or concealed behind bodyguards and retainers. 'A source of little visible delight but necessary'. Heathcliff's return was for Catherine a claim on her attention and loyalty, a reminder to her of essentials. The social pattern wasn't everything. There was something 'else'. The Grange was pleasant. But one should remember 'the Heights' Heathcliff, who had shared childhood experiences with her, who had become a part of her knowledge of what life was like and was fated to be an outsider, touched that other level of feeling in her and in some way represented it.

Edgar chose to be jealous.

One episode in the struggle, the encounter between Heathcliff and Edgar in Chapter XI is especially painful. It is typical too of the whole effect of the novel in that, splendidly convincing, it yet does not give the impression of a nicely balanced reversal of the situation. There are several other scenes in the novel which might be described as 'painful' (e.g. the exchange of horses between Hindley and Heathcliff, the brutal exclusion of young Heathcliff from the tea party, the baiting of Isabella by Catherine), scenes in which deliberate violence is done to our ideas of elementary kindness and fairness, in which brute force asserts itself in the place of love and kindness. In Chapter XI the tables are turned on Edgar and he is locked in with Heathcliff and Catherine beyond the help of his men.

' "Fair means!" she said, in answer to her husband's look of angry surprise. "If you have not courage to attack him, make an apology, or allow yourself to be beaten. It will correct you of feigning more valour than you possess. And I wish Heathcliff may flog you sick for daring to think an evil thought of me!"'

One's comment here is that, much as Edgar's behaviour required a check, most of Catherine's taunts are beside the point. Edgar's object in obtaining the help of two servants to expel Heathcliff from the house was not to demonstrate his own valour but to make that expulsion more certain. And Catherine, by locking the door against assistance, had made a forcible re-adjustment that was no more 'fair' than her taunts. Heathcliff could only too easily have flogged Edgar sick. The effect of the scene is not to establish 'fair means' but to assert the importance of single strength, even violence, in conditions which deprive people of artificial helps. The encounter in the kitchen is an analogy of the greater theme. Love and kindness are not enough. As now

in this struggle, so it was, always would be, in the eternal conditions of Wuthering Heights 'I'd rather see Edgar at bay than you' she tells Heathcliff

Yet Edgar does not lose face in the scene. He strikes 'a blow that would have levelled a slighter man'—a gesture of similar value to Heathcliff's flinging apple sauce into Edgar's face. Edgar is sympathetically presented to the end and his grief at Catherine's death contrasts with the violence of Heathcliff's reaction, his progress in avarice and vindictiveness. 'He was too good to be thoroughly unhappy long. He didn't pray for Catherine's soul to haunt him. Time brought resignation and a melancholy sweeter than common joy'

The differences between Catherine's feelings towards Heathcliff and his towards her are as much the 'cause' of her death as Edgar's behaviour. Catherine is at the centre of intolerable misunderstanding. She tells Heathcliff 'I begin to be secure and tranquil, and you, restless to know us at peace, appear resolved on exciting a quarrel. Quarrel with Edgar if you please, Heathcliff, and deceive his sister: you'll hit on exactly the most efficient method of revenging yourself on me'. Then—'What new phase of his character is this?' . I've treated you infernally—and you'll take revenge! How will you take it, ungrateful brute? How have I treated you infernally?' Nelly comments 'The spirit which served her was growing intractable'

Catherine is driven to distraction by the pressure of misunderstanding even from those who love her. She accuses Nelly of 'apathy', and Nelly continues 'The stolidity with which I received these instructions was, no doubt rather exasperating' but I believed that a person who could plan the turning of her fits of passion to account, beforehand, might by exerting her will manage to control herself tolerably, even while under their influence'

Here Nelly 'places' Catherine, as Catherine's accusations of 'apathy' had 'placed' Nelly. Which 'placing' is the more important? We know that Nelly is conventional and that her moralising is rarely quite to the point, also that the degree of conventionality of Nelly's opinions varies, and that it is often difficult to decide when she is the butt of irony and when not. Our sympathy does go to Catherine, but only because her earlier attempts to state her feelings have been sufficiently serious and convincing, convincing at the level at which they claim to be convincing. As convincing as poetry. When Edgar, with Nelly's approval, appears before Cathy to act his expected part, our sympathy for Catherine deepens, for she is being driven into a confusion of less serious, irrelevant feelings. Edgar insists

" 'Will you give up Heathcliff hereafter, or will you give me up? It is impossible for you to be *my* friend and *his* at the same time and I absolutely *require* to know which you choose

" 'She rang the bell till it broke with a twang. I entered

leisurely. It was enough to try the temper of a saint, such senseless, wicked rages! There she lay dashing her head against the arm of the sofa, and grinding her teeth, so that you might fancy she would crash them to splinters''

The breaking bell breaks Catherine. In this paragraph and in those immediately following, the Nelly Dean standard receives its fiercest buffeting. 'I went about my household duties, convinced that the Grange had but one sensible soul in its walls, and that lodged in my body'. The Lintons have the dignity of people who suffer strong feelings, but Nelly represents merely the common sense which can afford to be perpetually kind. She is a witness. The account of Catherine's derangement is quite real and justifies its complexity, and being enacted in the presence of Nelly Dean's normality it establishes the loneliness of Catherine's situation, and its inevitableness—'her frightful isolation'.

III

The whole of the long struggle between Hindley and Heathcliff has the same painful quality as the encounter between the latter and Edgar, and it is usually passed over though it occupies an important place in the novel. Is there a 'meaning' to the struggle between these two—Hindley, a pure Earnshaw and the interloper Heathcliff? Hindley is not by any means contemptible. He too, having lost love, decides to die and his ferocious despair is impressive. 'His sorrow was of that kind that will not lament. He neither wept nor prayed, he cursed and defied, execrated God and man, and gave himself up to reckless dissipation'. This is another attitude shared by all the chief characters. They take the measure of life and decide to die. Each of these wilful deaths—Hindley's and Edgar's included—is an assertion of the reality of feelings, of the importance of never forgetting, of final seriousness, that life is not worth having at any price. Nelly taunts Hindley, as Cathy later taunts Heathcliff, with 'They all hate you—that's the truth'. And Heathcliff admits that 'It's a pity he cannot kill himself with drink. He's doing his utmost, but his constitution defies him'.

We cannot ignore too, Nelly's alarmingly non-committal moralizing in Chapter XVII.

'“I used to draw a comparison between him (Edgar) and Hindley Earnshaw, and perplex myself to explain satisfactorily why their conduct was so opposite in similar circumstances. They had both been fond husbands, and were both attached to their children, and I couldn't see how they shouldn't both have taken the same road, for good or evil. But, I thought in my mind, Hindley, with apparently the stronger head, has shown himself sadly the worse and the weaker man. When his ship struck, the captain abandoned his post, and the crew, instead of trying to save her, rushed into riot and confusion, leaving no hope for their luckless vessel. Linton, on the contrary, displayed the true

courage of a loyal and faithful soul, he trusted God, and God comforted him. One hoped, and the other despaired: they chose their own lots, and were righteously doomed to endure them. But you'll not want to hear my moralizing, Mr Lockwood, you'll judge as well as I can, all these things—at least, you'll think you will, and that's the same''

The effect of this passage is to give the reader a deliberate jolt, to compel him to reconsider whether he has understood Hindley at all or Edgar, and by what standards he dismisses them. 'He's barely twenty-seven, it seems', Dr Kenneth tells Nelly, 'that's your own age—who would have thought you were born in one year?'

Heathcliff's hate for the Lintons is a main theme and is made credible—but his triumph over (his murder of?) Hindley, cannot be satisfactorily allegorized. It is protracted and painful and vivid, and its purpose seems to be to 'convey', to demonstrate still further the vindictiveness of Heathcliff. Nelly Dean, the agent of common morality, could not prevent herself 'from pondering on the question—Had he (Hindley) had fair play?' In relation to Heathcliff 'fair means' and 'fair play' are equally irrelevant terms. If the weakness of an account of Heathcliff is to throw him out of human analogy, it is not entirely the fault of the critic. For, outside the passionate affirmations of Catherine and his childhood with her, Heathcliff himself has more in common with a conception like Volpone than with human nature. He becomes, after Catherine's death, the embodiment of ruthlessness. He becomes two-dimensional in that he is made, unlike any of the other main characters, entirely consistent and because he is actuated only by hate. He is the agent of 'moral teething'. 'I have no pity! I have no pity! The more the worms writhe, the more I yearn to crush out their entrails! It is a moral teething—and I grind with greater energy in proportion to the increase of pain. It's odd what a savage feeling I have to anything that seems afraid of me'

It is possible to consider the treatment of Isabella's infatuation with Heathcliff as a criticism of romantic love, but one hesitates to ascribe anything so tendentious (perhaps extraneous) to Emily Brontë. She seems to use this stage in the story first to throw into sharper relief on the female side those differences established between Edgar and Heathcliff, that is, to give substance to Heathcliff's scornful comparison (of Catherine with the Lintons)—'She is so immeasurably superior to them'. Secondly, and this is her main purpose, to bring out the peculiar atrociousness of Heathcliff's hate. The more atrocious the hate, the more atrocious, we are to feel, is Heathcliff's suffering. It is not easy to see Isabella as the object of irony. She is 'infantile' 'the infatuated girl' 'the poor thing'. Emily Brontë's irony (directed mainly against Lockwood, Joseph and Nelly) is more subtle. Isabella represents not romantic love but another kind of incomprehension of the Catherine-Heathcliff relationship, another thread in that tangle of self-righteous mis-

understanding which creates in the novel a pressure of thwarted feelings Catherine feels no rivalry—her warning to Isabella is sincere So absurd does Isabella's insinuation of rivalry appear to Catherine that she becomes 'on mature consideration, really offended with her companion' Isabella's insinuations are the counterpart of Edgar's irrelevant jealousy The manner of Nelly's discovery of the girl's abduction has the effect of underlining unmistakably the author's interest in her 'My surprise and perplexity were great on discovering, by touch more than vision, Isabella's springer, Fanny, suspended by a handkerchief, and nearly at its last gasp' To this Heathcliff reverts later—'The first thing she saw me do, on coming out of the Grange, was to hang up her little dog' Heathcliff's cynical cruelty to the dog is an extension of his treatment of Isabella

After her marriage the girl is shown to possess humour and toughness, an unexpected loyalty to Edgar and unexpected courage in defending him 'Whatever he (Heathcliff) may pretend, he wishes to provoke Edgar to desperation he says he has married me on purpose to obtain power over him, and he shan't obtain it I'll die first! I just hope, I pray, that he may forget his diabolical prudence and kill me! The single pleasure I can imagine is to die or to see him dead!' 'I'd rather he suffered *less* if I might cause his sufferings and he might *know* that I was the cause' As a contrast to the stubborn loyalty of Isabella, kind-hearted Nelly becomes a silly agent of Heathcliff's malevolence 'Well, Mr Lockwood, I argued and complained and flatly refused him fifty times but in the long run he forced me to an agreement I engaged to carry a letter from him to my mistress and should she consent, I promised to let him have intelligence of Linton's next absence from home Was it right or wrong?' I tried to smooth away all disquietude on the subject by affirming, with frequent iteration, that the betrayal of trust, if it merited so harsh an appellation, should be the last' Of course it is not the last, and it does merit the harsh appellation Nelly's open-mindedness on such subjects is one way in which her choric, unheroic status is made clear She and Lockwood are outside the tragic hierarchy 'I seated myself in a chair, and rocked to and fro, passing harsh judgment on my many derelictions of duty, from which, it struck me then, all the misfortunes of my employers sprang'

Heathcliff, after Catherine's death, becomes manifestly something less than her feelings towards him Only towards the end does he make an effort to put himself in touch with people, become, for a time, more human He turns—as others had done throughout the novel—to the affection and kindness of Nelly He explains himself to her

' "I get levers and mattocks to demolish the two houses, and train myself to be capable of working like Hercules, and when everything is ready and in my power, I find the will to lift a slate off either roof has vanished! My old enemies have not beaten

me, now would be the precise time to revenge myself on their representatives I could do it and none could hinder me But where is the use? I don't care for striking I can't take the trouble to raise my hand! That sounds as if I had been labouring the whole time only to exhibit a fine trait of magnanimity It is far from being the case I have lost the faculty of enjoying their destruction, and I am too idle to destroy for nothing''

Though Heathcliff does not turn to love, he does suspend his hatred But it is now for him, as it was from the first for Catherine, not a human relationship, even one of hate, that must be sought

' "I dreamt I was sleeping the last sleep by that sleeper, with my heart stopped and my cheek frozen against hers" '

The force of the words 'stopped' and 'frozen' assert the intensity of a wish, like the force of the word 'puzzles' in 'puzzles the will', or the appalling force of the words 'cold' and 'piled' in 'Cold in the earth and the deep snow piled above thee'—which appear to engage unexpectedly the whole weight of the writer's most secret feelings

There is a change in Heathcliff, but the explicitness of his repudiation of 'labouring the whole time only to exhibit a fine trait of magnanimity' should be a caution against any attempt to interpret the novel in the light of this change

' "Nelly, there is a strange change approaching I'm in its shadow at present I take so little interest in my daily life, that I hardly remember to eat and drink Those two who have left the room are the only objects which retain a distinct material appearance to me, and that appearance causes me pain, amounting to agony About *her* I won't speak, and I don't desire to think, but I earnestly wish she were invisible her presence invokes only maddening sensations *He* moves me differently and yet if I could do it without seeming insane, I'd never see him again! You'll perhaps think me rather inclined to become so", he added, making an effort to smile, "if I try to describe the thousand forms of past associations and ideas he awakens or embodies But you'll not talk of what I tell you, and my mind is so eternally secluded in itself, it is tempting at last to turn it out to another

"Five minutes ago, Hareton seemed a personification of my youth, not a human being, I felt to him in such a variety of ways, that it would have been impossible to have accosted him rationally In the first place, his startling likeness to Catherine connected him fearfully with her That, however, which you may suppose the most potent to arrest my imagination, is actually the least for what is not connected with her to me? and what does not recall her? I cannot look down to this floor, but her

features are shaped in the flags! In every cloud, in every tree—filling the air at night, and caught by glimpses in every object by day—I am surrounded with her image! The most ordinary faces of men and women—my own features—mock me with a resemblance. The entire world is a dreadful collection of memoranda that she did exist, and that I have lost her! Well, Hareton's aspect was the ghost of my immortal love, of my wild endeavours to hold my right, my degradation, my pride, my happiness, and my anguish

"But what do you mean by a *change*, Mr Heathcliff? Then you are not afraid of death?"

"Afraid? No!" he replied. "I have neither a fear nor a presentiment, nor a hope of death. Why should I? With my hard constitution and temperate mode of living, and unperilous occupations, I ought to, and probably *shall*, remain above ground till there is scarcely a black hair on my head. And yet I cannot continue in this condition! I have to remind myself to breathe—almost to remind my heart to beat! And it is like bending back a stiff spring—it is by compulsion that I do the slightest act not prompted by one thought, and by compulsion that I notice anything alive or dead, which is not associated with one universal idea. I have a single wish, and my whole being and faculties are yearning to attain it. They have yearned towards it so long, and so unwaveringly, that I'm convinced it *will* be reached—and *soon*—because it has devoured my existence. I am swallowed up in the anticipation of its fulfilment. My confessions have not relieved me, but they may account for some otherwise unaccountable phases of humour which I show. O God! It is a long fight, I wish it were over!"

Those rhythms (they represent the strand of reality in the novelist's subject matter) are as fine an achievement, as much of a poem as *Cold in the earth*. The most serious prose in *Wuthering Heights* is written out of the same organization of feelings which produced the poem. Emily Brontë is the first writer to have used the novel as a vehicle for that kind of statement which is contained in the finest of English dramatic poetry.

Heathcliff's life, and the dead Catherine's, is a long loyalty to that connectedness of which Hareton is, we feel, a not very important fragment. Heathcliff is connected—'in a variety of ways'—by a knot of feelings and Hareton is abandoned, is made candidly insignificant, in the next sentence. 'That, however, which you may suppose the most potent to arrest my imagination, is actually the least for what is not connected with her to me?' The prose moves on to that confessional soliloquy which is what Heathcliff and Catherine 'mean'—'the ghost of my immortal love, of my wild endeavours to hold my right, my degradation, my pride, my happiness, and my anguish'. Heathcliff and Catherine share 'but one single wish', are 'associated with one universal idea'. The rhythms bend back the stiff spring.

IV

The alteration in Heathcliff is brought about, it is implied, by Cathy and Hareton

'They lifted their eyes together to encounter Mr Heathcliff, perhaps you have never remarked that their eyes are precisely similar, and they are those of Catherine Earnshaw'

The Eainshaws have, from one point of view, *ousted* Heathcliff. He has been throughout of *involuntary* service to them, and has somehow, despite himself, won the respect of both Cathy and Hareton. Earlier in the novel, the catching of the infant Hareton by Heathcliff—the physical ease of it—had seemed symbolic. ‘Heathcliff arrived underneath just at the critical moment, by a natural impulse he arrested his descent, and setting him on his feet, looked up to discover the author of the accident’

Involuntarily Heathcliff has given something to Hareton and also to Cathy, has made them more valuable, more durable. But, as if to emphasize differences, the absence of compromise, they 'shift to the Grange'. Only old Joseph will live in the kitchen at Wuthering Heights. 'The rest will be shut up'

Little of the more serious prose of the novel is devoted to Cathy or to Hareton. And fairly coherent as even the account suggested here could be, in a general sort of way, it is not enough to contain the whole power of the novel. Any account which represents the novel as a complete condemnation of the Linton world seems to be unsatisfactory, to any such account the appropriate answer would be to quote, say, this

“I shouldn’t have discovered that he had been there, except for the disarrangement of the drapery about the corpse’s face and for observing on the floor a curl of light hair, fastened with a silver thread, which, on examination, I ascertained to have been taken from a locket hung round Catherine’s neck. Heathcliff had opened the trinket and cast out its contents, replacing them by a black lock of his own. I twisted the two, and enclosed them together.”

At one or two points, the novelist appears to have attempted to express the value of Hareton Heathcliff says.

“He has satisfied my expectations. If he were a born fool I should not enjoy it half so much. But he’s no fool, and I can sympathize with all his feelings, having felt them myself. I know what he suffers now, for instance, exactly—it is merely a beginning of what he shall suffer though. And he’ll never be able to emerge from his bathos of coarseness and ignorance. I’ve got him faster than his scoundrel of a father secured me, and lower, for he takes a pride in his brutishness. I’ve taught him to scorn everything extra-animal as silly and weak. Don’t you think Hindley would be proud of his son, if he could see

him? Almost as proud as I am of mine But there's this difference, one is gold put to the use of paving-stones, and the other is tin polished to ape a service of silver *Mine* has nothing valuable about it, yet I shall have the merit of making it go as far as such poor stuff can go *His* had first-rate qualities, and they are lost rendered worse than unavailing I have nothing to regret, *he* would have more than any but me are aware of And the best of it is, Hareton is damnably fond of me! You'll own that I've outmatched Hindley there If the dead villain could rise from his grave to abuse me for his off-spring's wrongs, I should have the fun of seeing the said off-spring fright him back again, indignant that he should dare to rail at the one friend he has in the world''

If the meaning of Hareton had been very important to the novelist, this speech, one feels, should have been an important speech But it is not As an attempt to generalize the meaning of Hareton it is not very impressive The differences between Hareton and Linton are too great to mean much The rhythm and argument are not serious The gold and tin imagery is not (by the novel's own standards) very interesting, represents no organization For once the italics are mere thumps

And, in Chapter XXXIII, Nelly too describes the nature of Hareton's relationship to Heathcliff

"I heard Hareton sternly check his cousin on her offering a revelation of her father-in-law's conduct to his father He said he wouldn't suffer a word to be uttered in his disparagement if he were the devil, it didn't signify, he would stand by him, and he'd rather she would abuse himself, as she used to, than begin on Mr Heathcliff Catherine was waxing cross at this, but he found means to make her hold her tongue, by asking how she would like *him* to speak ill of her father? Then she comprehended that Earnshaw took the master's reputation home to himself, and was attached by ties stronger than reason could break—chains, forged by habit, which it would be cruel to attempt to loosen''

Something should have come out in that last sentence and doesn't, something that is blurred by 'chains forged by habit' and 'it would be cruel' The blurs mark interstices

The conclusion of the story is pastoral in its quality, with the girl sticking primroses into Hareton's porridge, and Mrs Dean still there, and the pharisaical Joseph, endeared to us despite himself by his wonderful mouthing language Joseph is part of the heath, he has the gnarled tenacity of a rooted thing, represents the continuity of the Earnshaws He too, at his level, is an agent of relentless 'moral teething', the thrasher, the righteous servant of lawful masters Like nature, he is indifferent His language, its tortuous articulateness, gives detail to our knowledge of Wuthering Heights His fanatical speech adds value to the place, and the

extraordinary exactness and variety with which his vernacular is given is typical of the consistent yet varied particularity of that world. Everything is presented, dramatized, reported. The author has withdrawn herself so completely, has been so consistently impersonal, that we are left to infer, from careful weighing of language values, where her main interests lie. There is some agreement that the main stress is on the Catherine-Heathcliff-Edgar themes, not on the survival of the Earnshaws in Cathy and Hareton. The story ends with the softening to love by Hareton and the suspension of hate in Heathcliff. But the latter is not moved by Cathy's 'I don't hate you'

' "Keep your eff's fingers off, and move, or I'll kick you!"'
cried Heathcliff, brutally repulsing her. "I'd rather be hugged by a snake. How the devil can you dream of fawning on me? I *detest* you!"'

There are no graces of sentiment, no concessions to love. We are left to surmise whether Heathcliff paused in hate because he felt its futility or had lost interest, or because he respected Catherine in Cathy and the reminder of his own youth in Hareton.

The reticence of the novelist in the last pages of her work, her reluctance to underline, to perorate, should make its interpretation exceptionally tentative. And we are not helped, as in reading an Elizabethan play, by a recognition of the interaction of the poetry and Elizabethan ethics, by a sense of 'relevant intensity'. The value of such words as 'You sure and firmset earth' or 'Good morning to the day! And next—my gold' is rich yet definite because they combine with other coherent ideas and feelings in Elizabethan language and in the plays themselves. But there are places in *Wuthering Heights*, especially in the account of the Hindley-Heathcliff struggle, where the force and precision are great, yet the amount of meaning is disproportionately slight.

'The charge exploded, and the knife, in springing back, closed into its owner's wrist. Heathcliff pulled it away by main force, slitting up the flesh as it passed on and thrust it dripping into his pocket. He then took a stone, struck down the division between two windows, and sprang in. His adversary had fallen senseless with excessive pain and the flow of blood that gushed from an artery or a large vein. The ruffian kicked and trampled on him and dashed his head repeatedly against the flags.'

Particularity, vividness and insistence in language are a sign that special meaning is being given. The force of 'gushed' 'slit up the flesh' 'dripping' 'dashed' is greater than the amount of meaning created by the situation. To consider the scene as merely another demonstration of Heathcliff's ruthlessness seems inadequate, yet that is probably all that the author intended. The excess of vividness must therefore be taken either as a symptom of immaturity,

of insufficiently understood intensity, or as an error of judgment on the author's part, a failure to recognize that the physical violence and ruthlessness of Heathcliff had already been established without the insistence on the 'gushing' and 'slitting'

Yet it is the particularity which makes the novel and carries us over those passages where we might be inclined to demur. The feelings of Catherine towards Edgar and Heathcliff are finally convincing and they are the most important theme in the book. It is after her death that Heathcliff tends to lose three-dimensional value, to become a type of ruthlessness and relentless hatred. His ferocity towards Hindley lacks the meaning of his antipathy to the Lintons, neither the value of his forbearance towards Cathy and Hareton, nor the significance of the survival of the lovers is made unambiguously clear. To have made these things clear would have meant sentimentalizing the whole book, and Heathcliff violently repulses the idea that he might be won by 'love'. 'How the devil can you dream of fawning on me!' The Heights are left empty. The view that the young lovers are a necessary compromise between the Linton and the Heathcliff levels is almost certainly a sentimental one. For if Emily Brontë has been careful about anything, she has been most careful not to qualify whatever the Catherine and Heathcliff themes may be taken to mean. For Catherine and Heathcliff are what she set out to say.

When it has acknowledged that *Wuthering Heights* does not possess the coherence of a *Macbeth*, criticism is freed to enjoy what is indestructible and rare and heroic in Emily Brontë's achievement. For she has been more ambitious than Shakespeare, has shown a 'gigantic ambition' of the order which the quotation from Virginia Woolf's essay splendidly suggests. Her world is emptier than Shakespeare's and her view less reassuring. 'Nobody knew what ailed her but me' wrote Charlotte. 'I felt in my heart she would die if she did not go home'. Her novel touches a level of experience which does not often come into the world of letters. It is a quality of suffering, it has anonymity. It is not complete. Perhaps some ballads represent it in English, but it seldom appears in the main stream, and few writers are in touch with it. It is a quality of experience the expression of which is at once an act of despair and an act of recognition or of worship. It is the recognition of an absolute hierarchy. This is also the feeling in Aeschylus. It is found amongst genuine peasants and is a great strength. Developing in places which yield only the permanent essentials of existence, it is undistracted and universal. It is behind Tolstoy and Conrad, in whom it is 'transferred' to the sea. It is not strongly present in English life. It enriches the mind of Europe with a layer of unembittered asceticism.

Emily Brontë works in that level, in prose and in some poems. There she finds her recurrent theme. She was not a philosophic novelist. The value of her novel is in the vitality of the feelings,

the steady unwillingness to make a pattern to simplify the experience of her young life

* * * *

'The Elizabethan morality was an important convention it hindered no feeling' (T S Eliot, *Selected Essays*) The status of a literary form, the seriousness of the purposes for which it is used, varies from age to age, and from country to country The Elizabethan drama was remarkable in that, although it was 'public', it could be on occasion a vehicle for the most serious feelings of the greatest dramatists—could justify the use of poetry *Wuthering Heights* is the first English novel to aim at a comparable seriousness

The thorough dramatization of this novel is not necessarily to be taken as showing a dissatisfaction with the novel form Emily Bronte could not have written as an omniscient author without being compelled to adopt an omniscient attitude, to distance by her tone and comment, to explain what she could not explain She aimed at the maximum of statement with the minimum of explanation It is her method which gives her language its consistent immediacy The absence of *parti pris* (or decorum or agreement between writer and reader) in her language is another reason why her novel is disliked She probably had no reading public in mind

Perhaps *Wuthering Heights* does demonstrate how incapable the novel is of replacing the drama The protagonist in a Greek play represents the maximum of communal affirmation and seriousness, and the play's tragic universality is greater than that of any Elizabethan tragedy because the point of departure and return (*i e*, the chorus) represents nothing as comforting as Elizabethan morality The chorus in Greek tragedy represents merely a possible hypothesis This too is the tone at the end of *Wuthering Heights*

G D KLINGOPULOS

MUSIC CHRONICLE

PROFESSOR WESTRUP once remarked that some of the most dangerous misconceptions about musical history arose from considering the characteristics of a school or period as though they were the characteristics of an individual composer. This is another way of making a point which I have often made in insisting on the need for some basic notion of the 'totality of the European tradition', if one is to have any real understanding of a particular branch of it. And in listening to music, over the last quarter, on radio and gramophone, it has been brought home to me that we are approaching a situation in which no cultivated person will have any further excuse for the grosser kind of historical distortion.

For it used to be said that it was no use talking about the totality of the European tradition, when most musically inclined people had no opportunity to hear any pre-eighteenth-century music. This case, though often an excuse for laziness, had an element of truth in it, but now the advent of the B B C's Third Programme has made it an illegitimate argument. Anyone can now have regular and continuous experience of pre-eighteenth-century music by the simple process of turning a knob. The music will not all be of equal interest, and the performances will vary both in virtuosity and scholarship, nonetheless this aspect of Third Programme music is a factor of immense cultural significance, to my mind it will, in the long run, exert a profound effect on the musical literacy of this country. It is not merely that the opportunities offered give listeners a saner, a more historical outlook on Europe's musical past, offering incidentally great richness of experience which was formally denied to all except a few specialists. More than this, increased familiarity with early music suggests new criteria and elicits different responses from those demanded by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century music. And indirectly this makes the approach to contemporary music immeasurably simpler. Modern composers will themselves profit by this increased acquaintance with early music, still more, listeners will find that much in contemporary music which appeared to them anti-traditional merely belonged to a tradition different from that in which they were nurtured. In my view, the chance of obtaining a more coherent outlook on the European tradition which the Third Programme offers is at least as important, in the creation of a more rewarding relation between composer and public, as the more frequent performance of the works of the contemporary composer himself.

The Third Programme audience is a minority audience. Even a minority, however, which might be expected to take an interest in pre-eighteenth-century music, can hardly become very knowledgeable about that subject unless it is given opportunities to experience the music at first hand. Thus though it may be true to say that

the Third Programme is preaching only to those willing to be converted, it is not true to say that it preaches merely to those converted already. Of course, no one would claim that the Third Programme, musically speaking, could not be improved upon. There is still a tendency for the programmes, especially those of mediaeval music, to be rather 'bitty'. I'd like to see regular *series* of recitals devoted to (for instance) Machaut, Dunstable, Dufay, Ockeghem, Obrecht, so that we could really begin to assimilate this music in our blood and bones. Some such habituation is essential, as it is, we are just beginning to acquire the savour when the music stops. Nonetheless, the fact remains that the B B C has given us the chance to hear regular broadcasts of pre-eighteenth-century music, played—on the whole—with competence and scholarship, with musicianly understanding and with a mature sense of period. This has never been done before on such a scale, because no ordinary concert-giving institution could have the resources necessary for calling in the appropriate authority and group of performers for each recital. The B B C has done it, and perhaps the measure of their success is that we have become blasé, we cheerfully miss works that in the old days we'd have considered ourselves lucky to have heard, even if it meant staying up till midnight. Even so, the rich experiences that come our way are plentiful enough. Offhand, I recall two most moving thirteenth-century motets, a lovely performance of a Ferrabosco fantasia for viols (played in tune!), part of an exquisite mass by Dufay, some subtly melancholy songs of Binchois, and some thrilling pieces for brass by composers who aren't even names to most of us (in Ernst Meyer's splendid series devoted to baroque music). The cultural implications of all this—apart from our immediate pleasure—can perhaps be suggested by saying that it seems to me that there are already signs that the fifteenth century is being reinstated, as was the sixteenth some decades ago. This desirable process might be assisted if some enterprising publisher were to produce an English translation of C. van den Borren's fine book on the period (*Etudes sur le XV^{ème} Siècle Musical*).

On the contemporary side also, the Third Programme is fairly comprehensive. Here too I think a rather more systematic policy might not come amiss. We could do, for instance, with a series devoted to the 'classics' of contemporary music, many of which, although thirty or more years old, have never had an adequate hearing in this country. (The key works of Schoenberg are a case in point). Nonetheless, we've had copious draughts of modernity, from Willy Burkhard's noble symphony to a cantata of Webern, and performances of Bartók are becoming almost an everyday occurrence. Somebody is sure to say that there is too much—not too much Bartók especially, but too much Advanced Music of one kind or another, and that we'll all be suffering from musical indigestion. Here's where we must exercise discrimination, and self control, in these lean times we may perhaps permit ourselves a surfeit of spiritual nourishment. Some might say that we're not

likely to grow excessively plump on a diet of Webern cantatas. In any case it seems to me clear that on the musical side the Third Programme can help to create a new informed audience and ultimately a richer musical culture. I refer specifically to the musical side, not the literary, which is a different story.

Possibly, if this new public expands, the time will come when the recording companies will fall into step and start issuing a series of adequately performed records of pre-eighteenth-century music to take the place, for English people, of the now unobtainable *Anthologie Sonore* series. For the moment, the recording companies follow tepidly in the wake of the 'nineteenth-century orchestral' public, when they venture outside it, as in Decca's new recording of Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater*, the performance by Joan Taylor, Kathleen Fernier, and the Boyd Neil Orchestra under Roy Henderson, is spoiled by lack of a scholarly authenticity. For instance, many of the appoggiaturas are simply left out, this isn't just a pedantic quibble, it emasculates the harmony by removing the dissonances. Nonetheless these records are well worth having, for the music has a virginal charm, a quietly ecstatic glow conveyed largely through the airy dancing rhythms, which make it impossible for me to agree with a few very distinguished authorities who regard Pergolesi as an amateurish and over-rated composer. Kathleen Fernier's voice is as beautiful in quality as ever, and the performance has many points of sympathy and sensitiveness, despite its frequent misinterpretations of eighteenth-century convention. The recording is not up to Decca's highest standard. Another recording by Decca of the same period is of Campoli playing Tartini's G minor sonata (not the Devil's Trill, but a much finer and less well known work). In this case the performance loses owing to the substitution of a piano for harpsichord and string bass. But Campoli's playing has a lucid refinement and a sense of style which is entirely convincing. I wish Decca would invite Campoli to record some (and eventually all) of the Bach solo sonatas and partitas. I know of no-one in the country capable of playing them more adequately.

The quarter's recordings bring out clearly enough that it is with music of the Bach and pre-Bach periods that an active tradition of performance has been lost, so that players can't hope to interpret this music convincingly without a certain amount of research and experiment. By playing simply the notes as they are on the printed page, even with music of Bach's time, one is often not playing the melodic contours, the harmonies, the rhythms the composer intended. (To some extent this is the case, as we have seen, with the Pergolesi recording.) But from the eighteenth century symphonic composers onwards, a tradition of performance still survives. Consider two fine Mozart recordings in this quarter's batch, the tragic D minor quartet, played by the Hungarian Quartet (H M V) and the second horn concerto, played by Dennis Brain and the Philharmonia Orchestra under Walter Susskind (Columbia). One can quibble about this point or the other in these performances, one can even perhaps find an excess of elegance in the wonderfully

suave playing of the quartet But one can have no doubt that the interpretations are right in principle (Both works are mature Mozart, the quartet possibly the greatest of all Mozart's quartets, the horn concerto having a last movement which is one of the most richly comic pieces Mozart ever wrote) Still more, with Brahms and Schubert, there is a continuous tradition of performance, so that if, in the Menuhins' performance of Brahms' third violin sonata, or in Aksel Schiotz's singing of *Die Schöne Mullerin* (both H M V), we find any shortcomings, it is not likely to be through any deficiency of knowledge, but through either a deficiency of taste, or of technique, or through a temperamental inability to penetrate the composer's mentality To me, Schiotz does not seem to be a very sympathetic Schubert singer, nor is his technique impeccable Menuhin's virtuosity we may take for granted, and the piano part of the Brahms is played with precision and intelligence But the performance, perhaps intentionally, damps down Brahms' lyricism and that, in this most muscular and rugged of works, seems to me unnecessary

The survival of a tradition of performance depends largely, I suppose, on fashion, certainly it is not merely a question of date, for if it is preserved in the case of Mozart and Brahms, it is almost lost in the case of a composer, Rossini, who chronologically comes between them One reason for this is undoubtedly the decline of singing, it was convenient if one could be superior about the Italian virtuoso vocal music when one could no longer sing it In modern times, Conchita Supervia's performance of *La Cenerentola* caught the authentic Rossinian note, the slightly impudent urbanity and stylish glitter Jennie Tourel's performance hasn't the wit of Supervia's, but she sings Cinderella's delicious rondo with authority and assurance, and that is an achievement of which any singer can be proud She is accompanied by the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra under Cimara (Columbia)

Although the recording companies haven't so far shown any reflection of the Third Programme's pre-Bach enterprise, they do seem to show an increasing interest in contemporary music, which is possibly a sign of the times Chief among a number of notable issues this quarter is an H M V recording of a late work, the *Sinfonietta*, by that remarkable Czech composer Leos Janacek, brilliantly played by the Czech Philharmonic under Kubelik This work displays the composer's extreme originality in dealing with material that appears to be simple almost to the point of naiveté There is a 'primitive' folk culture behind the short, supple, lyrical phrases, but the aphoristic style is far removed from a Smetana-like geniality What odd rhythmic and tonal convolutions the motives are submitted to, how disturbingly strange, and yet at the same time fresh and sanguine, is the orchestration, which reminds one more of seventeenth-century ceremonial music, written to be performed in the open air, than of the nineteenth-century concert hall In a smaller way, we have here much of the quality that makes Janacek's *Mass of the Earth*, written in 1928, two years after the

Sinfonietta, in my view one of the greatest works of our time. There is the same combination of the youthful vitality of a folk culture with an extreme sophistication—an awareness of the tensions and complexities of the contemporary world. These records deserve to rank in importance with those of the Bartók Fifth Quartet which were recently issued at the same very reasonable price.

A somewhat different version of the compromise between purity and complexity which we find in Janacek, is manifested in Sibelius's *Tapiola*, which is given a superb performance and recording by Beecham and the R P O on H M V. In Sibelius's music one isn't conscious of the presence of a folk culture, as one is in Janacek's, nor of any sophistication of techniques derived from folk music. Basically his idiom is European and nineteenth century, but he develops this style in an increasingly personal way, as he comes to understand more clearly what he wants to do. He is trying to convey an experience of nature, but it isn't just an imitation of the sounds of nature since if that were the whole story there'd be no comment to make except that (to paraphrase Dr Johnson) Nature can do it so much better. It is, of course, the reactions of a human personality to the impersonal forces of nature which Sibelius is interested in, and it is perhaps the limitation of his genius that he became more interested in this experience than in the relations between human beings. Janacek is both a communal composer and a contemporary composer of isolation, Sibelius in his last and most significant work seems to me essentially a composer of isolation. I think this is why he developed away from the dualistic Beethovenian symphony—with its conflict between the individual and a social and technical convention—to the 'self-generative' unity of the *Seventh Symphony* and *Tapiola*. Nor is it an accident that his late work has—in its austerer way—structural and harmonic similarities with the late work of Wagner, and even of Delius, the hyper-individualist. But Sibelius remains perhaps the greatest of the group of composers who attempted to convey this experience, and the frigid terror evoked by the climax of *Tapiola* represents the quintessence of his contribution. I think it is what, all his life, he was working towards, though it may seem in some way a less 'central' and civilized achievement than the fourth and sixth symphonies.

Yet another angle on the relation between the individual and society is suggested by Shostakovich's Sixth Symphony, enthusiastically played by the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, under Reiner, and given a recording which by American standards is first class. After the Janacek and Sibelius the music may seem rather trite, but it is by no means devoid of interest, and is to my mind immeasurably superior to the composer's overpraised, adolescently facetious first symphony. I prefer Shostakovich as a Soviet Citizen, rather than as a Parisian *enfant terrible*. The first movement is an immensely long, introspective adagio, personal in mood, though owing much to the romantic rhetoric of Mahler and Tchaikovsky. The other two movements are perkily cynical, with bits of Rossini

by way of Poulenc, in places unexpectedly delicate and sensitive. Again the spacing and scoring owe much to Mahler. The music seems derivative and diffuse compared with the Janacek, but one doesn't object to the many 'influences', which are of the kind which has been common to the Russian tradition ever since Glinka. It's probably healthier that Shostakovich should be heir to an Italianate Tchaikowsky than to the indigenous Moussorgsky, for there is no longer much point in neo-primitivism—unless, like Janacek, you're a man of much stronger character than Shostakovich is, and able to convert primitive material to a personal logic. But what seems to me unsatisfactory about this symphony is the disparity between the first movement and the other two. The individualism, the introspection, seem to be concentrated in the first movement, the social values—the 'entertainment'—in the others, and I can see no necessary connection between the two sets of values at all. I suppose Shostakovich must have had some idea in mind, when composing a symphony on such an unusual plan, but he does not get it across, to this listener at least. It affects me as a characteristically over-simple account of the relation between the individual and society. Even the feeblest passages of this work, however, sound like first-class music compared with the Kabalevsky overture which fills up the odd side. This is pure *musique de société*, Pump Room stuff inflated on the modern orchestra.

For all his immaturities, Shostakovich has a real flair for 'effect', though less sensitive, his rhetorical outlook has something in common with that of Britten, and there is also some parallel between his attempt to relate the Russian national to a European (in particular Italian) style, and Britten's attempt to do the same for the English tradition. The indigenous Russian tradition is represented this quarter by a remarkable recording of Moussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*, played with great power and rather unexpected subtlety by Moisevitch. This music never seems to me altogether happy in its pianistic dress, in essence it is theatre music, with all Moussorgsky's barbaric splendour and psychological insight. But it is certainly one of the most interesting piano works of the later nineteenth century, and this recording is mechanically excellent, and in every way highly recommended.

The European side of the Russian tradition is represented by Stravinsky's *Firebird*, in an authoritative performance by Ansermet and the LPO, and a Decca recording that rivals the famous version of *Petrouchka*, in its fire and delicacy. The music is, of course, an extension from Stravinsky's master, Rimsky Korsakov, nineteenth-century Russian exotic, with Italian opera and German symphonic poem latent in the music's technique. The 'national' elements are here rather of the picture postcard order, though no one would deny that the postcards are very pretty, painted by a genius. As he develops, Stravinsky acquires simultaneously a much deeper understanding of the native Russian tradition, and a much profounder idea of European culture. The whole problem of Russian music, as perhaps of Russian culture generally, derives

from the fact that Russia had no Renaissance. In seeking for a native Russian style, Stravinsky thus turns partly to a mediaeval, partly to a primitive, inspiration. He then tries to achieve a synthesis of European musical culture which shall compensate for Russia's lack of a Renaissance, and in his finest work, such as the *Symphonie des Psaumes*, fuses the Russian (mediaeval and primitive) with the European (classical and theatrical) elements. As the years have gone by and Stravinsky has been twice deracinated, it has become increasingly difficult for him to achieve this equilibrium, which is why his latest (American) works may seem to lack the vitality of the compositions of the middle years. But these latest works are of great significance, because they honestly face up to the position that Stravinsky finds himself in. Looking back, it seems, at this date, that Stravinsky's evolution has been—despite its apparent convolutions—of an austere and remorseless logic. A most moderate and sensible account of Stravinsky's career and significance is given by Eric Walter White, in his recent book on the composer, published by John Lehmann (15/-). This book, intelligent in its general outlook, covers the whole of Stravinsky's work, though one must regret that it was not possible to illustrate the text with musical examples.

Vaughan Williams's *Flos Campi* and *The Lark Ascending* are not among his most impressive pieces, and certainly nowhere approach the level of the Fifth Symphony. They evade the central problem of the relation between the individual and society by being genre pieces. *The Lark Ascending* is an offshoot of the rhapsodic-pentatonic investigations of the *Pastoral Symphony*, though without the latter work's concentrated poetry. (A recording of the Pastoral, by the way, is long overdue.) *Flos Campi* is a study in archaic exotica, with a most effective use of solo viola, and a wordless chorus. Except for the rather embarrassing pentatonic chopstick stuff in the middle, the work is moving and beautiful, but its beauty is more analogous to that of the better works of Bax (despite its austerer harmony) than to Vaughan Williams's own most representative work. Both recordings are good (*Flos Campi* H.M.V., the *Lark* Columbia), though *Flos Campi* has a hint of the raucousness that marred the recording of *Job*. William Primrose plays the viola solo with an appropriate voluptuousness.

Among other miscellaneous recordings sent for review I must mention two songs of Fauré, *Arpège* and *Clair de Lune*, sung by Gerard Souzay with a velvety tone and sensitive phrasing, but with a certain effeminacy which is not really appropriate, even to Fauré's most seductive music (Decca). Another touching Fauré piece of his middle period, written about the same time as the Requiem, is the *Pavane*, performed in the original version with orchestra and chorus, by the Philharmonic Orchestra and Chorus under Sargent (Columbia). This work loses considerably when it is performed without the chorus parts. Records of the orchestral suite from Strauss's *Rosenkavalier* and the Cesar Franck *A minor Chorale* I will pass over since I find the music repellent. I should

add, however, that Fernando Germani's organ playing is of remarkable virtuosity, and that the recording of the Franck is easily the best recording of the sound of an organ I have heard. Both these circumstances make one look forward pleasurably to Germani's promised recording of the Bach B minor prelude and fugue. Another magnificent Italian artist, the pianist Micelangelo, is wasted on two Spanish picture postcard pieces. If something Spanish was required, why not something from Albeniz's *Iberia*, of which this player would give a superb performance.

In future, this music chronicle will be divided into three sections. The first will cover outstanding broadcasts during the past quarter, the second will deal with records of some exceptional interest, and the third will discuss any new musical books of importance.

In the next issue, I shall include comments on broadcasts, notes on the performance of eighteenth-century music, centred around new recordings of works by Bach, Handel, Marcello, Mozart and others, and reviews of St Foix's book on Mozart's symphonies, and of Adèle Katz's *Challenge to Musical Tradition*.

W H MELLERS

CORRESPONDENCE

Palazzo Borghese, Rome

19th June, 1947

Gentlemen,

In his review of my *Selected Poems* in *Scrutiny* for Spring, 1947, Mr Mason makes a very odd remark. 'If these lines were composed before Mr Bottrall had read *Little Gidding*, he should in self-defence have mentioned the fact'. On what compulsion? The lines were, in fact, drafted in the Autumn of 1941 and finished in their final form in June/July 1942, long before I had read *Little Gidding*—I was then in Sweden, where books came slowly and late. I ought, perhaps, also to say that *Distance has Magic* was drafted in the Autumn of 1939 and finished in the Spring of 1941, when I had read only *Burnt Norton* of the *Four Quartets*.

The reason why I did not state (where? in a footnote?) that I had not read *Little Gidding* when I wrote *Freedom Lies in Acceptance* is that, until I saw Mr Mason's review it had never struck me that there was any resemblance between the two poems. It would be very trying, anyhow, if a poet had always to list at the bottom of each of his poems works he had *not* read, particularly if, as in this case, the other work had not, at the time of writing, been published.

I am very grateful to Mr Mason for pointing out the stupid misprint of 'understanding' for 'understudying' on page 11 of *SP*.

Yours faithfully,

RONALD BOTTRALL

COMMENTS AND REVIEWS

HENRY JAMES'S FIRST NOVEL

RODERICK HUDSON, by Henry James (John Lehmann, 8/6)

Mr John Lehmann is to be thanked for putting *Roderick Hudson* into circulation. Perhaps it will now be read. And if it is read—really read—it will cause some surprised enjoyment. For its reputation has not been of a kind to get it picked out from among the shelf-fuls of Henry James in the library. The current impression since James began to 'come in' has been, I think, that *Roderick Hudson* is at best no better than negligible—just what you would expect a first novel to be. After the war of 1914, sampling some lecture-courses for the English Tripos, I went to one on 'The Modern Novel', given by the young advanced intellectual, the intransigent anti-academic, of the day and a good index of what 'the few who can talk intelligently' (etc.) were saying, and he told us how James, in revising, had changed Roderick's exclamation, 'It's like something in a novel', into 'It's like something in a bad novel'. Nothing more, one gathered, needed saying here was the authoritative dismissal.

Actually, that reading of the revision is utterly unwarranted. As Mr Michael Swan, adducing evidence, tells us in the introductory note to the present edition, Henry James, looking back, thought highly of this early work. This is not surprising. *Roderick Hudson* is an extremely interesting and extremely distinguished novel. For a first novel it is very remarkable indeed—remarkable in its maturity and in its accomplishment. And it was written in the mid-Victorian age—began in 1874, when *Daniel Deronda*, which was to influence James so profoundly, had not yet appeared. Of the English novelists of his time, his seniors or co-evals, George Eliot alone can be thought of as having much, in the way of instruction and incitement, to give a writer bent, as James was, on making the writing of novels a completely serious art, and there is no reason for seeing *Roderick Hudson* as markedly indebted to her. The debt that can, as I shall show later, be noted is to Dickens, in whom no one will suppose James to have found the model or the inspiration for an art addressed consistently and calculatingly to the adult mind, and demanding its sustained critical attention. In *Roderick Hudson*, when all criticisms have been urged, we have such an art, so that James's first novel has better claims to classical currency—is more worth reading and re-reading, than the greater number of Victorian fictions that are commonly offered us as classics.

James has a real theme—a theme qualified to engage the full powers of a highly intelligent mind, widely experienced and profoundly interested in human potentialities. What is astonishing is that, in his first 'attempt' (his own words), he should have been able to show so sufficient an answering mastery of art. For, in

spite of shortcomings that he himself notes in the late Preface, *Roderick Hudson* is, substantially, an achieved work. It exhibits no crudities, no redundancies, and no uncertainties of purpose. The technical preoccupation is already most distinctively Jamesian. It is true that what particularly strike one as characteristic felicities in the writing turn out again and again to have come in with the late revision, yet it didn't need this to make the writing wonderfully intelligent, brilliant and sensitive.

If one took one's cue from the title—and it is remarkable what persistent anaesthesias can plead no better excuse—one might judge that James had been overweening in his choice of theme. Imagine a sculptor-born, but born in a small town of pristine New England. Transported in early manhood to Europe, to Rome, how will he respond to the sudden impact of 'an immemorial, a complex and accumulated civilization', with all its visible witness, its overwhelming revelation, of art. (In Rowland Mallet's praise 'he had heard absolutely for the first time in his life the voice of taste and authority'.) It is an interesting idea, but how, one might comment, could it conceivably be *done*, seeing that to *do* the postulated genius is obviously impossible—postulated is all it can, in the nature of things, be? Isn't it a mark of the young James's callowness that he shouldn't have seen the disqualifying force of this objection? He was indeed in later years, in some of his best *nouvelles*, to deal successfully with the writer as writer, but writing was something he knew from the inside—*that* was *his* genius, and it had a major part in his life. But what did he know about sculpture or the visual arts? Wasn't his very ignorance, or naivety, about them a condition of the confidence with which he committed himself to the undertaking? This is the best he can do by way of evoking one of Roderick's masterpieces (the bust of Christina Light).

'The bust was in fact a very happy performance—Roderick had risen to the level of his subject. It was thoroughly a portrait—not a vague fantasy executed on a graceful theme, as the busts of pretty women in modern sculpture are apt to be. The resemblance was close and firm, inch matched inch, item with item, grain with grain, yet all to fresh creation. It succeeded by an exquisite art in representing without extravagance something that transcended and exceeded.'

Even as strengthened in the revised phrasing—it ran earlier 'there was extreme fidelity of detail, and yet a noble simplicity. One could say that, without idealization, it was a representation of ideal beauty'—this kind of thing hardly helps our conventional assent to the postulate. And isn't James disabblingly romantic in his notion of creative genius? Isn't he merely offering us in his *Roderick Hudson*—incontinently 'spontaneous' and, when the afflatus comes, an inspired *enfant terrible*, but otherwise childish in irresponsibility, moody and inflammable—a conventional 'artistic temperament', and asking us to believe that great works of art can issue out of that?

But to criticize the book on these lines is to ignore what it actually offers. As James himself says in the late Preface, 'the centre of interest throughout is in Rowland Mallet's consciousness'—'and this in spite of the title of the book'. What he tells us he aimed at doing is what, with an art already extraordinarily Jamesian and mature, he has done. Rowland's consciousness was to be not 'too acute', but 'a sufficiently clear medium to present a whole'. 'This whole was to be the sum of what "happened" to him, or in other words his total adventure, but as what happened to him was above all to feel certain things happening to others, to Roderick, to Christina, to Mary Garland, to Mrs. Hudson, to the Cavaliere, to the Prince, so the beauty of the constructional game was to preserve in everything its especial value for *him*'.

James in telling us this is explaining how it should be that the weakness he remarks in the treatment of Roderick, whose break-up under exposure to Europe occurs too rapidly, isn't fatal to the book. The same considerations explain why the offer to make creative genius, in the person of a sculptor, a major actor in the drama wasn't disastrous. What had to be conveyed was the impression on Rowland Mallet—his conviction confirmed by that of the world in general that peoples Rowland's drama, and that one must judge to be sufficiently *done*. Nor is any crudely romantic notion of genius endorsed by James or by Rowland. In fact, to explore the nature of genius is one of the aims of the book, and a questioning of the relation of creative power to the 'artistic temperament' constitutes one of Rowland's central preoccupations. He is surprised, disconcerted and shocked by the progressive exposure of Roderick's lack of ballast and excess of egotism and irresponsibility. He had believed in the 'essential salubrity of genius', and we have every reason for associating him with Mary Garland when we learn about her that she 'had supposed genius to be to one's spiritual economy what a large balance at the bank is to one's domestic'. Such an assumption clearly doesn't strike James as merely a revelation of naivety.

There is characteristic Jamesian art in the way in which Roderick is played off on the one hand against Sam Singleton, developing a small talent with conscientious and pedestrian industry, and, on the other, against Gloriani, who represents 'art with a mixed motive, skill unleavened by faith, the mere base maximum of cleverness'—represents the sophistication and corruption of cosmopolitan Europe. 'He had a definite, practical scheme of art, and he knew at least what he meant'. In this sense he was almost too knowing'. (There is, too, paired against Singleton, another kind of accomplished limitation—mere academic industry, in the person of the innocent and skilful Miss Blanchard). By his dramatic and poetic methods James is clearly working towards the suggestion of a positive idea of genius that agrees pretty much with Mary Garland's. Again and again the critical and constructive intention becomes explicit in dramatic utterances or reported reflections, as for instance the letter to his cousin Cecilia in which Rowland

writes 'I think it established that in the long run egotism (in too big a dose) makes a failure in conduct, is it also true that it makes a failure in the arts?'

But we have here only part of the theme or system of interests that gives *Roderick Hudson* its life, organization and significance. The 'drama' of 'Rowland Mallet's consciousness' enacts, in James's first novel, that critical-constitutive preoccupation with the 'international theme' which is so radically and persistently characteristic of James's own genius. Rowland Mallet, with the significantly mixed ancestry of which we are so carefully told, has been 'brought up to think much more intently of the duties of our earthly pilgrimage than of its privileges and pleasures'. Become a man of independent means, with no need or call to work, he devotes himself to his un-Puritanic interest in art, but suspects all the same that 'he wholly lacks the prime requisite of an expert *flâneur*—the simple, sensuous, confident relish of pleasure'. He is 'for ever looking for the uses of the things that please and the charm of the things that sustain'.

As even these brief quotations suggest (especially the second), James's attitude towards America—here, of course, it is New England in particular—isn't a simple one. Nor is his attitude towards Europe. What he dramatizes in this novel, as in later ones, is a complex process of comparative appraisal, out of which emerges the suggestion of an ideal positive that is neither Europe nor America. Of the aspect of American civilization represented by Mr Leavenworth James may be said to be simply critical, the satire 'places' unambiguously, and there is little suggestion of any compensating entry to be made on the other side of the account.

'Mr Leavenworth was a tall, expansive, bland gentleman, with a carefully-brushed whisker and a spacious, fair, well-favoured face, which seemed somehow to have more room in it than was occupied by a smile of superior benevolence, so that (with his smooth white forehead) it bore a certain resemblance to a large parlour with a very florid carpet, but without mural decoration. He held his head high, talked impressively, and told Roderick within five minutes that he was widower travelling to distract his mind, and that he had lately retired from the proprietorship of large mines of borax in the Middle West. Roderick supposed at first that under the influence of his bereavement he had come to order a tombstone, but observing the extreme benevolence of his address to Miss Blanchard he credited him with a judicious prevision that on the day the tombstone should be completed a monument of his inconsolability might appear mistimed. Mr Leavenworth, however, was disposed to give an Order,—to give it with a capital letter.

"You'll find me eager to patronise our indigenous talent", he said. "You may be sure that I've employed a native architect for the large residential structure that I'm erecting on the banks of the Ohio. I've sustained a considerable loss, but are we not

told that the office of art is second only to that of religion? That's why I have come to you, sir. In the retreat that I'm preparing, surrounded by the memorials of my wanderings, I hope to recover a certain degree of tone. They're doing what they can in Paris for the fine effect of some of its features, but the effect I have myself most at heart will be that of my library, filled with well-selected and beautifully-bound authors in groups relieved from point to point by high-class statuary. I should like to entrust you, can we arrange it, with the execution of one of these appropriate subjects. What do you say to a representation, in pure white marble, of the idea of Intellectual Refinement?"

"Whose idea, sir?" Roderick asked. "Your idea?"

But at this question, and especially at a certain sound in it, Mr. Leavenworth looked a little blank. Miss Blanchard artfully interposed, "I wish I could induce Mr. Hudson to think he might perhaps do something with mine!"

It immediately relieved the tension and made Mr. Hudson consider her with great gravity. "If your idea resembles your personal type, Miss Blanchard, I quite *see* my figure. I close with you on Intellectual Refinement, Mr. Leavenworth, if this lady will sit for us."

I have quoted this passage at some length, because it illustrates well James's debt to Dickens. Dickens couldn't have written it, it comes from a more cultivated mind. ("Whose idea, sir?" Roderick asked. "Your idea?") Yet the debt to *Martin Chuzzlewit* is unmistakable, and it is plain that what James got from Dickens was not merely a manner, but a cue for 'placing' critically certain aspects of the American scene. (Much could be written on this debt in relation to James's later work.)

But mostly what James sees in America calls for more complex and delicate attitudes than that of *Martin Chuzzlewit*, even when it calls for the satirically critical note. Mr. Striker, for instance, (see Chapter III) is a different case from Mr. Leavenworth.

"An antique, as I understand it", the lawyer continued, "is an image of a pagan deity, with considerable dirt sticking to it, and no arms, no nose and no clothing. A precious model, certainly."

"Now this study of the living model", Mr. Striker pursued. "Give Mrs. Hudson a sketch of that."

"Oh dear, no!" cried Mrs. Hudson shrinkingly.

"That too", said Rowland, "is one of the reasons for studying in Rome. It's a handsome race, you know, and you find very well-made people."

"I suppose they're no better than a good tough Yankee", objected Mr. Striker, transposing his interminable legs. "The same God made us!"

—It might seem that the entry was to be made all on one side

here too. But by the time we have read Mr Striker's closing speech we are aware that the business of appraisal is not so simple as that

"I didn't go to any part of Europe to learn my business, no one took me by the hand, I had to grease my wheels myself, and such as I am, I'm a self-made man, every inch of me! Well, if our young friend's booked for fame and fortune I don't suppose his going to Rome will stop him. But, mind you, it won't help him such a long way neither. If you've undertaken to put him through there's a thing or two you had better remember. The crop we gather depends upon the seed we sow. He may be the biggest genius of the age—his potatoes won't come up without his hoeing them if he takes things so almighty easy as—well, as one or two young fellows of genius I've had under my eye—his produce will never gain the prize. Take the word for it of a man who has made his way inch by inch and doesn't believe that we wake up to find our work done because we have lain all night a-dreaming of it—anything worth doing is plaguy hard to do!"

Rowland makes the credit entry for us, he, we are told, 'could honestly reply that this seemed pregnant sense, and he offered Mr Striker a friendly hand-shake as the latter withdrew'

But it is when we come to Mary Garland, the counter-figure to Christina Light, *femme fatale* and product and representative of corrupt and corrupting Europe, that we have the separating out of the American elements that James peculiarly values. 'Miss Garland', says Mr Striker, introducing her, 'is the daughter of a minister, the grand-daughter of a minister, the sister of a minister'. That is, she is meant to give us the essential New England ethos, and her presentment expresses a positive and warmly sympathetic appreciation that forecasts *The Europeans*. It was not long after the introduction before Rowland had 'passed from measuring contours to tracing meanings', for 'she appealed strongly to his sense of character'. She is very intelligent, and not at all incapable of developing an interest in art, as she proves when Rodenck's collapse brings her, with his mother, to Rome. She concludes finally that 'man wasn't made to struggle so much and miss so much, but to ask of life as a matter of course some beauty and some charm'. But she is incorruptible. And James clearly admires with Rowland 'the purity and rigidity of a mind that had not lived with its door ajar upon the high-road of cosmopolite chatter, for passing phrases to drop in and out at their pleasure, but that had none the less looked out, from the threshold, for any straggler on the "march of ideas", any limping rumour or broken-winged echo of life, that would stop and be cherished as a guest'. For James she clearly represents a cherished possibility—a distinctively American possibility. 'She might have been originally as angular as he had, on the other scene, liked her for being, but who was to say now what mightn't result from the cultivation in her of a motive for curves?'

Mary Garland may not be as positively a triumph as Christina Light, yet she is not a failure. Her part in any case isn't to hold the lime-light. James himself in the Preface questions the convincingness of her relations with Roderick. Wasn't it too convenient that Roderick just at that improbable moment (as James sees it) should imagine himself to fall in love with such a girl, and so effectively, with ironic consequences for Rowland? But, whatever weaknesses may be detected in it, *Roderick Hudson* is a most interesting success. It is a minor work in the Jamesian *œuvre*, but even in comparison with the great things it deserves better than to be spoken of slightly.

F R LEAVIS

THE POETIC IMAGE, by C Day Lewis (Cape, 8/6)

The Clark Lecturer for 1946 begins with some arch comments on critics and criticism and some coy hesitations about entering a field which, as a poet, he finds strange and unfamiliar. Other poet-critics from Dryden to Mr. Eliot have not found this kind of mock-modesty necessary, but it is typical of a certain naiveté that pervades the whole book. With it goes a disarming ease of manner, a safe eclecticism (the first chapter draws on Coleridge, Middleton Murry, T. E. Hulme, H. W. Garrod, Herbert Read, Christopher Caudwell and Charles Williams, among others) and an apparent inability to come to grips with any serious critical problem. The whole discussion is in fact misconceived from the start: it is impossible to isolate 'the image' in this way. Imagery may provide a useful starting-point for the discussion of poetry, but little progress can be made without raising questions of realization and its control, movement, tone, attitude and so on, which demand a method of practical criticism far more disciplined and sensitive in its use of analysis and judgment than anything offered here.

'Wishing to undertake some theme which might throw light upon the poetry of our own time, yet believing it the most serious defect in modern criticism that this poetry is not sufficiently related and shown in perspective with the great vistas of the English poetic tradition, I seemed to find what I wanted in the poetic image

the image is the constant in all poetry, and every poem is itself an image'. The subject, in fact, is the nature of poetry itself, a matter on which nothing profitable can be said that is not firmly rooted in particular perceptions and judgments. In spite of a great show of examples and illustrations much of Mr. Day Lewis's discussion is in general terms of a familiar type. The first chapter, on *The Nature of the Image*, goes over the ground of the origin of poetry in 'the great educative myths which enticed man forward out of his brutishness' etc., discusses the nature of poetic truth, which comes from 'the perception of a unity underlying and relating all phenomena', and concludes that 'the poetic image is the human mind claiming kinship with everything that lives or has lived, and making good its claim'. The second chapter, on *The Field of Imagery*, says that what we chiefly look for in imagery

is freshness, intensity and evocative power, but that only the first two can be gauged objectively. With these inadequate instruments Mr Day Lewis analyses the different uses to which imagery has been put by poets from the Elizabethans to the Romantics. The Romantic image, we are told, is 'a mode of exploring reality by which the poet is in effect asking imagery to reveal to him the meaning of his own experience'—does this really mean anything? The chapter ends with five examples of personification as used by Marvell, Collins, Keats, Rossetti and Auden, in which we are asked to see 'a steady rise of colour, of sensuousness and intensity' and to accept this as a typical development.

The Pattern of Images discusses the methods of poetic creation, the way the poet builds up into a pattern the images presented by his unconscious mind so that a consistency of impression is achieved which is the sign of a successful ordering of experience. The illustrations include some simple analyses—of Keats's successive revisions of a line in *Hyperion*, of Browning's *Two in the Campagna* and of Herbert's *The Collar*—which are quite useful as far as they go, but the lack of any sound basis of critical comparison appears when these are followed by two pages on *Modern Love*. Mr Day Lewis can even accept the empty and pretentious 'Lucifer' sonnet as a great poem: he describes Meredith as 'apart from Browning, the highest intelligence at work upon poetry in modern times', and he finds recurring key images which bind *Modern Love* together 'on something the same principle as that of the key images in Valéry's *Cimetière Marin*'.

A chapter on *The Living Image* raises the question how far the poet can successfully make use of objects like aeroplanes and engines in metaphor, points out the dangers of obsolescence (in the manner of the seventeenth-century epicycles and planispheres) and forecasts 'a high rate of mortality among such specifically modern images because of the poetic conditions in which they live'. Modern poetry is said to lack confidence in explicit statement, which could be an instrument 'to clarify, relate and prolong the life of our novel or highly personal imagery' (Just how is not very clear, in spite of the illustrations—a phrase of Yeats, a 'great surging poetic generalization' from *Modern Love*, and a tentative reference to *Four Quartets*). There is therefore a strain upon technique caused by the tendency 'to concentrate more and more of the poem's meaning within its images' either by their intensity and compression or by sheer accumulation. This is a point capable of being put to critical use, but Mr Day Lewis hardly takes the opportunity. He tells us that Auden succeeds with the method of accumulation because 'his grasp of a wide contemporary situation and his insight into its patterns create themes powerful enough to vivify and relate images which might otherwise have seemed perfunctory', and the supporting example doesn't do much to justify the dubious generalization.

His answer to those who advise a return to 'the old changeless subjects of poetry—love, death, nature' is that owing to historical

and social developments our response to these subjects changes

'The love-poems of the Celian moment, or the nostalgic, regretful love poems of the late Victorians still delight us to-day, not because love is changeless (if it was, there would not be such an extraordinary contrast between the tone of seventeenth-century and nineteenth-century love poetry) but because each of these two kinds of poetry was true to the love-relationship of its time and place'

Does this mean that the difference between, say, *The Definition of Love* and *Love is Enough* is to be explained in purely social terms? It will be seen that Mr Day Lewis has a respect for established literary values which must have comforted the more conservative of his academic audience. He quotes Raleigh with approval on the impossibility of analysing Christina Rossetti's poetry, instancing 'When I am dead, my dearest' with 'O rose, thou art sick' and 'Take, oh take those lips away' as pure lyrics—'Such quicksilver poems glide away from the critical touch they offer no opening by which criticism may enter to hatch its parasitic theories'. It is useless to protest that one has seen adequate analyses of two at least of these poems and that the third doesn't seem in any way impossible: the attitude is familiar enough, and we are not altogether surprised to come later upon a word for the Georgians.

'The true personal poetry is under something of a cloud just now: we tend to condemn the "Georgian" poets wholesale, for instance, on the grounds that they wrote about their own personal relationships with trivial objects and their poems were therefore trivial. But the verdict has no more logic than charity behind it. No subject remains trivial when the poetic imagination has done with it'.

Must one explain that the only criticism of the Georgians that matters is precisely of their failure in poetic imagination?

Broken Images deals with the apparent anarchy of the modern poet's use of imagery and discusses various defences of different types of current practice. Mr Day Lewis uses an account by Mr Dylan Thomas of his creative method as a basis for discussing one of the latter's own poems, contrasts *Harry Ploughman* with *Felix Randall*, analyses a poem by Mr George Barker not very convincingly and contrasts two passages by Mr David Gascoyne. He comes to the conclusion that there is a dangerous 'centrifugal force' in the images of modern poetry and that it has sacrificed variety and humanity in sounding the depths of individual experience. Here as elsewhere the argument is confused by a lack of critical standards.

It seems hardly necessary to pursue the windings of this desultory discussion into the last chapter, which leaves us safe at sea among the Archetypal Patterns. A peroration addressing the poets of the future brings the lectures to an end on a decorous note of vague nobility.

R G Cox

FOLK SONGS OF CHHATTISGARH, by Verner Elwin (Geoffrey Cumberlege, Oxford University Press, Indian Branch, 1946 25/- net)

There may be some question whether this book is to be valued chiefly as a cultural record or as a contribution to translated literature, but no one can doubt the value, from one point of view or another, of its having been written and published. It is the outcome of what must have been patient, persistent work and trusted companionship among the relatively primitive peoples, of Hindu culture, in a huge area in the east of the Central Provinces. The translations are agreeable and unaffected, individual enough in flavour to make it clear that the minimum of preconceived western style is being imposed on the originals.

For people concerned with literature and general culture this is perhaps the best sort of anthropology. The picture it gives is blurred and casual compared with the systematic account of details offered by well-trained visiting anthropologists. But it succeeds, gradually and cumulatively, where they often fail, in producing the impression of a different but understandable kind of human life, not described and talked about from the standpoint of an outsider but communicated by the people in their songs, songs which are here very evidently a heightened form of village conversation and story-telling. Dr Elwin includes some useful commentary and anthropological explanations, and more might have been a help to those of us who are not well read in Indian anthropology and social institutions. But even for us the customs and beliefs of the people, and their predominant interests and sentiments, emerge convincingly, and we get something of the flavour of their attitudes towards marriage, procreation, work, hunger, danger, magic and romantic love. As a record of the spirit of an unfamiliar people, and the special variety of human experience that their culture makes possible, the book is admirable.

I feel more doubtful whether the translations make so significant a contribution to English literature as Mr Archer suggests in his introductory Comment. They are in free verse and the lines, although pleasant to read, are only occasionally organized with rhythmical cogency, usually the words could have been varied a good deal without much rhythmical loss. The songs rely enormously on imagery and symbolism presented without explicit statement of their latent meaning—as with the symbols of dreams and children's play—and in this respect the translations reinforce an already strong tendency in modern European writing. Mostly the symbols are drawn from local customs, plants and so on, exotic enough to demand a rather deliberate mental manoeuvre before their force can be felt by a stranger to the culture. But in dealing with the simpler facts of sexual activity, rightly stressed by Mr Archer as one of their most intense concerns, the songs offer a more familiar, less local symbolism.

A tireless interest in the physical aspect of sexual attractions and relationships contributes—is probably the most important con-

tribution—to the effect, which this book overpoweringly has, of making one realize more fully what the word 'primitive' means. Under the romanticizing influence of writers who ricocheted from the repressed or from the trivially sophisticated to the 'primitive' we are inclined to forget the implication of rudimentary and undeveloped in that word. Dr Elwin's picture is of a people really primitive, however appealing and in many ways healthy, their culture is preoccupied at simple levels and only hints at some of the human possibilities that the more developed cultures realize. For this reason, Mr Archer's comparison of Dr Elwin's contribution to translated literature with Arthur Waley's breaks down. The Chinese culture which Arthur Waley's work reflected was not only different from ours but was highly enough developed to be relevant to us over a wide range. Chhattisgarh culture makes contact with us at only a few points.

The primitive quality as a positive value in these songs will appeal most to people who are still absorbed in reacting against sexual taboos. This provides one of the links with some modern European writing, a linkage that both Dr Elwin and Mr Archer are anxious to demonstrate. To me it seems a defect, the zeal with which resemblances are sought between these songs and the productions of recent Western authors (ranging from T. S. Eliot to Geoffrey Grigson). Many in Mr Archer's eclectic sweep are obviously ephemeral, and I feel no doubt that translations as convincing as Dr Elwin's of material as interesting as the songs of Chhattisgarh will long outlive the memory of some of the writers so oddly embedded in the notes and commentary. D W H

Having been obliged in the last number of *Scrutiny* to report unfavourably on Mr Garnett's attempt to introduce Henry James by a selection of short stories, I am glad to be able to refer readers to Mr Philip Rahv's *The Great Short Novels of Henry James* (Dial Press Inc., New York, 1944) for a demonstration of how such an undertaking can be realized. Mr Rahv's is a solid volume containing not 'the short novels' but many of the best of Henry James's long short stories—the *genre* in which he excelled. The choice is admirable, the only possible cavil is at being given *The Siege of London* when one would rather have had the indispensable *Pandora*. There is a model introductory essay on Henry James in half-a-dozen pages, and there are good short notes—literary criticism, generally helpful and never impertinent—prefixed to each story, that on *The Beast in the Jungle* being the most memorable. Mr Rahv's is certainly the volume to introduce new readers to Henry James, and one would like it to be available in this country. I understand that F. O. Matthiessen brought out during the War a collection of all James's stories about writers and artists, for which one has hitherto had to rummage many volumes of the collected edition. This collection has long been needed, and must be seen to be of much greater interest than the disappointing *Prefaces* long ago edited by R. P. Blackmur, which stand so high in conventional esteem. Q D L

ALBERT CAMUS: DIFFICULT HOPE

LA PESTE, by Albert Camus (Gallimard, 200 fr)

The appearance of this novel after five years' silence is heartening to those who 'felt' rather than could demonstrate that *The Outsider* was far from representing the total attitude of an author whose literary standing was bound up with the vindication of an outlook on life with claims to comprehensiveness. At any rate *La Peste* now provides an opportunity for examining in and through a literary work the 'enacting' of principles which were quoted as mere statements from a series of 'open letters'.

The change in perspective is not, however, quite as great as one could wish, although the predominance of construction and intelligent distancing in *The Outsider* might have given added weight to the following quotation from *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*, which seem to express the author's intentions as an artist

'Il y a un certain rapport entre l'expérience globale d'un artiste et l'oeuvre qui la reflète, entre Wilhelm Meister et la maturité de Goethe. Ce rapport est mauvais lorsque l'oeuvre prétend donner toute l'expérience dans le papier à dentelles d'une littérature d'explication. Ce rapport est bon lorsque l'oeuvre n'est qu'un morceau taillé dans l'expérience, une facette du diamant où l'éclat intérieur se résume sans se limiter. Dans le premier cas, il y a surcharge et prétention à l'éternel. Dans le second, oeuvre féconde à cause de tout un sous-entendu d'expérience dont on devine la richesse.'

Nothing in *The Outsider* seems to 'flash out' or allow us to guess that the author could so oppose himself to the attitude of the hero of that novel as he seemed to be doing in the letter addressed to 'un ami allemand' (cf *Scrutiny*, Vol. xiv, No. 2, p. 89) where he refused to despair or abandon the values of civilization and protested 'il m'apparaissait au contraire que l'homme devait affirmer la justice pour lutter contre l'injustice éternelle, créer du bonheur pour protester contre l'univers du malheur et moi, refusant d'admettre ce désespoir et ce monde torturé, je voulais seulement que les hommes retrouvent leur solidarité pour entrer en lutte contre leur destin révoltant'.

Consequently, to write, 'It may be that M. Camus will now be able to present a man with these qualities, a hero who is capable of doing as well as suffering' must be considered a dubious sort of literary extrapolation, particularly when we consider the heroisms from which M. Camus had never succeeded in freeing the expositions of his attitude. He seemed, for instance, to ignore all that tempers our admiration of Don Juan hurling defiance at the gods. There was a good deal of legerdemain in his attempt to maintain at the same time both the grandeur and the uselessness of life. In choosing to consider Sisyphe *happy* in the execution of

his task he passed over the fact that he was condemned to it against his will. And to arrive at the conception of life as a 'voie sans issue où tous sont engagés' he seems to have taken a number of short cuts which violate *la règle du jeu*—the complete honesty, the total exposure to experience and the willingness to follow the intelligence to its limits, which he himself laid down as the procedure he was trying to follow.

La Peste fails in one respect to dispel the doubts about the fairness of his play. For M. Camus has chosen as the vehicle of his ideas the account of an imaginary plague arising out of the depths of the earth, impossible to control by medical skill and passing away as mysteriously as it arose. Now, while this corresponds perfectly to the *malheur* at the centre of *The Outsider*, the unpredictable eruption which cuts short human life or severely limits human possibilities—'personne ne sera jamais libre tant qu'il y aura des fléaux'—our imagination refuses to link this story of a plague year with the 'years of occupation', an operation which M. Camus is subtly suggesting throughout the book, at least as long as we regard *that malheur* as in part a human catastrophe raising the problem of human responsibility. Secondly, as the novel develops we are invited to consider wider implications. One character remarks: 'Mais qu'est-ce que ça veut dire, la peste? C'est la vie, et voilà tout'. This implication, as I hope to show, is not grounded in the concrete situation.

Deliberate as are the limitations M. Camus has set himself, they nevertheless constitute an element of strength. All that was said of the firm command, the distancing, the style that gives uniformity to a lucid intellectual construction, in criticizing *The Outsider*, may be repeated with even greater conviction of *La Peste*. M. Camus has laboured to give the reader the pleasure of contact with a personal philosophy from which the purely personal has as far as possible been withdrawn. We are evidently to take the story as a 'myth'—it only remains to determine what sort of myth. In describing this journal of the plague year as a vehicle, I had in mind the distinction between the novel proper and the 'moralized fable'. M. Camus has not created (and perhaps could not) the illusion of 'life' to such an extent that we seek to explore every corner of his Oran—the town visited by the plague—to enrich our sense of the total meaning of *La Peste*. The choice of incident, the characters, the scenic descriptions are dictated by the desire to point to something else. But the myth has no poetic life, no richness and density, but just sufficient concreteness to carry the reflections on experience and the philosophical attitude.

Once we have recognized the genre, or, as readers, begin to direct our thoughts and feelings away from the particulars of the journal to the other particulars which are felt to be the true reference, the focus of attention is seen to be a scheme of values, those values, in fact, which were discussed in the philosophic essay and mentioned in the open letters. *La Peste* in a sense replaces these works and marks a significant advance on them. If this is so, the

critical attention should be concentrated on the actions and thoughts of those characters in the novel whose presence is justified by the kind of reference outwards the whole novel suggests. The drawback of an intellectual construction where everything is so carefully planned is the difficulty of overcoming the suspicion that crucial incidents may have been 'planted'—in the sense that incriminating evidence may be 'discovered' by the police who put it there—by the author for the sake of illustrating his pre-conceived scheme. One major example deserves discussion later on. A less damaging case is to be found in all that is narrated of a criminal named Cottard, who might be called a *collaborateur* with the plague. He is done very much from the outside and although the anti-social element obviously required doing, is in fact an indispensable part of any account of the 'mal de l'époque', Cottard is too much of a convenience and not enough of an imaginative creation.

The hero of *La Peste*, the writer of the journal, is a doctor who describes himself as 'un homme lassé du monde où il vivait, ayant pourtant le goût de ses semblables et décidé à refuser, pour sa part, l'injustice et les concessions'. Later on he gives a more comprehensive account of himself. He had discovered at the outset of his medical career that the fact of death was something he could not get used to or become reconciled to. 'J'étais jeune alors et mon dégoût croyait s'adresser à l'ordre même du monde. Depuis je suis devenu plus modeste mais puisque l'ordre du monde est réglé par la mort, peut-être vaut-il mieux pour Dieu qu'on ne croie pas en lui et qu'on lutte de toutes ses forces contre la mort, sans lever les yeux vers ce ciel où il se tait'. And he decides that it is worth while struggling even though he is bound to be defeated in the end. The worth of the struggle is measured by the sense of the values extinguished by death. Heroism, it should be noted, is now relegated to second place, 'juste après, et jamais avant, l'exigence généreuse du bonheur'. The horror of the plague is shown to lie chiefly in the deprivation and separation of those bound by the ties of affection and love. A special character is introduced to underline the point that human solidarity requires the sacrifice even of that which alone makes life worth living. He is a Parisian journalist who begins by protesting 'je suis étranger à cette ville' and tries to escape, but in the end comes to see that 'il peut y avoir de la honte à être heureux tout seul' and that he really belongs to the town. The efforts of the doctor and the band of volunteers to save what could be saved are measured in terms of their conscious sacrifice of all that they value. The glimpse of the ties so broken by consent or by death is sufficient to dispose of the idea that M. Camus knew of no other values than those exhibited in *The Outsider*.

In order to bring out further the faith that sustains the doctor, two contrasting views are presented. One is that of the Christian faith. A Jesuit priest is brought face to face with a child dying in agony. The priest cannot believe that the eternity of bliss possibly awaiting the child outweighs the suffering endured. He is

driven into admitting the scandal of willing the child's suffering because God wills it. Either that or nothing. The acceptance of this difficult belief brings on a fever and he dies. This summary cannot do justice to the sympathetic treatment he receives in the novel—another point of difference with *The Outsider*. The doctor gladly accepts the priest as a fellow-worker, but is not moved from his position.

This position on one plane of the novel is simple, as the following quotation may serve to show. The doctor, Rieux, is speaking to the Parisian journalist, Rambert:

' il ne s'agit pas d'héroïsme dans tout cela. Il s'agit d'honnêteté. C'est une idée qui peut faire rire, mais la seule façon de lutter contre la peste, c'est l'honnêteté.
—Qu'est-ce que l'honnêteté, dit Rambert, d'un air soudain sérieux.
—Je ne sais pas ce qu'elle est en général. Mais dans mon cas, je sais qu'elle consiste à faire mon métier.'

Not much more can be said on this level. M. Camus, however, wished to introduce a more general reference, and to do this he brings forward a character who may be said to come from the world of *The Outsider*. He is described as a *man* and one who does not waste words and is given a chance to explain himself at length in a meeting with the doctor after which they seal their friendship by a swim together in the sea. The function of this character seems to be to enable M. Camus to show the difference between his new position and those taken up in his earlier works. This forms the most interesting part of the book, but the least convincing as fiction. Consequently one's satisfaction with *La Peste* lies almost exclusively in the excellence of the author's intentions.

Tarrou is represented as having simplified his life into a search for *la paix intérieure*. His utility for the author is obvious in passages such as this:

' je souffrais déjà de la peste bien avant de connaître cette ville et cette épidémie. C'est assez dire que je suis comme tout le monde. Mais il y a des gens qui ne le savent pas, ou qui se trouvent bien dans cet état, et des gens qui le savent et qui voudraient en sortir. Moi, j'ai toujours voulu en sortir.'

Just as the whole philosophy of the doctor crystallized round the injustice of untimely death, Tarrou's way of life is bound up with the intolerable injustice of judicial condemnation to death. 'J'ai vu que la société où je vivais était celle qui reposait sur la condamnation à mort'. He therefore decided to join the enemies of that society, but abandoned them when he discovered that they, too, carried out executions. He concluded that 'nous étions tous dans la peste, et j'ai perdu la paix'. He felt thereby condemned to become a perpetual outsider.

Cela vous paraîtra peut-être un peu simple, et je ne sais si cela est simple, mais je sais que cela est vrai. J'ai entendu tant de raisonnements qui ont failli me tourner la tête, et qui ont tourné suffisamment d'autres têtes pour les faire consentir à l'assassinat, que j'ai compris que tout le malheur des hommes venait de ce qu'ils ne tenaient pas un langage clair. J'ai pris le parti alors de parler et d'agir clairement, pour me mettre sur le bon chemin. Par conséquent, je dis qu'il y a les fléaux et les victimes, et rien de plus. Si, disant cela, je deviens fléau moi-même, du moins, je n'y suis pas consentant. J'essaie d'être un meurtrier innocent. Vous voyez que ce n'est pas une grande ambition.

'Il faudrait, bien sûr, qu'il y eût une troisième catégorie, celle des vrais médecins, mais c'est un fait qu'on n'en rencontre pas beaucoup et que ce doit être difficile. C'est pourquoi j'ai décidé de me mettre du côté des victimes, en toute occasion, pour limiter les dégâts. Au milieu d'elles, je peux du moins chercher comment on arrive à la troisième catégorie, c'est-à-dire à la paix.'

Nothing in this account prepares us for the shock of hearing it summarized as follows

'—En somme, dit Tarrou avec simplicité, ce qui m'intéresse, c'est de savoir comment on devient un saint

—Mais vous ne croyez pas en Dieu

—Justement. Peut-on être un saint sans Dieu, c'est le seul problème concret que je connaisse aujourd'hui'

The doctor makes the rejoinder, 'je me sens plus de solidarité avec les vaincus qu'avec les saints. Je n'ai pas de goût, je crois, pour l'héroïsme et la sainteté. Ce qui m'intéresse, c'est d'être un homme'. And Tarrou comments, "Oui, nous cherchons la même chose, mais je suis moins ambitieux."

When the time comes for the doctor to sum up and to derive a lesson from the events of the plague year he concludes,

'Tout ce que l'homme pouvait gagner au jeu de la peste et de la vie, c'était la connaissance et la mémoire. Peut-être était-ce cela que Tarrou appelait gagner la partie'. Mais si c'était cela, gagner la partie, qu'il devait être dur de vivre seulement avec ce qu'on sait et ce dont on souvient, et privé de ce qu'on espère. C'était ainsi sans doute qu'avait vécu Tarrou et il était conscient de ce qu'il y a de stérile dans une vie sans illusions. Il n'y a pas de paix sans espérance, et Tarrou qui refusait aux hommes le droit de condamner quiconque, qui savait pourtant que personne ne peut s'empêcher de condamner et que même les victimes se trouvaient être parfois des bourreaux, Tarrou avait vécu dans le déchirement et la contradiction, il n'avait jamais connu l'espérance.'

The doctor gives up the attempt to find a meaning

'il pensait qu'il n'est pas important que ces choses aient un sens ou non, mais qu'il faut voir seulement ce qui est répondu à l'espoir des hommes' And he decides, 'Pour tous ceux qui s'étaient adressés par-dessus l'homme à quelque chose qu'ils n'imaginaient même pas'—(and here we must refer back to an earlier passage "d'autres, plus rares, comme Tarrou peut-être, avaient désiré la réunion avec quelque chose qu'ils ne pouvaient pas définir, mais qui leur paraissait le seul bien désirable. Et faute d'un autre nom, ils l'appelaient quelquefois la paix")—il n'y avait pas eu de réponse'

The doctor, however, identifies himself with common humanity

'Rieux décida alors de rédiger le récit qui s'achève ici pour témoigner en faveur de ces pestiférés, pour laisser du moins un souvenir de l'injustice et de la violence qui leur avaient été faites, et pour dire simplement ce qu'on apprend au milieu des fléaux, qu'il y a dans les hommes plus de choses à admirer que de choses à mépriser. Mais il savait cependant que cette chronique ne pouvait pas être celle de la victoire définitive. Elle ne pouvait être que la témoignage de ce qu'il avait fallu accomplir et que, sans doute, devraient accomplir encore, contre la terreur et son arme inlassable, malgré leur déchirements personnels, tous les hommes qui, ne pouvant être des saints et refusant d'admettre les fléaux, s'efforcent cependant d'être des médecins'

In finding ordinary human life not quite hopeless, and in making the most of what pitiful chances human beings have of realizing their hopes, the doctor of *La Peste* has deviated from the canons laid down in *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*. 'Mais une attitude absurde pour demeurer telle doit rester consciente de sa gratuité. Ainsi de l'oeuvre. Si les commandements de l'absurde n'y sont pas respectés, si elle n'illustre pas le divorce et la révolte, si elle sacrifie aux illusions et suscite l'espoir, elle n'est plus gratuite. Je ne puis me détacher d'elle. Ma vie peut y trouver un sens, cela est dérisoire. Elle n'est plus cet exercice de détachement et de passion qui consomme la splendeur et l'inutilité d'une vie d'homme'. In measuring the degree of importance to be attached to this development of thought we must in the first place refer to the conduct and reflections of the doctor. Now, though the doctor shows a good deal of humanity in his relations with his patients, he seems to have to undergo an argument with himself before he can recognize himself in them. The people of Oran are described as soulless creatures of habit, hard-working and not inventive in seeking their pleasures. 'On dira sans doute que cela n'est pas particulier à notre ville et qu'en somme tous nos contemporains sont ainsi. Sans doute, rien n'est plus naturel, aujourd'hui, que de voir des gens travailler du matin au soir et choisir ensuite de perdre aux cartes, au café, et en bavardages, le temps qui leur reste

pour vivre. Mais il est des villes et des pays où les gens ont, de temps en temps, le soupçon d'autre chose. En général, cela ne change pas leur vie. Seulement il y a eu le soupçon et c'est toujours cela de gagné. Oran, au contraire, est apparemment une ville sans soupçons, c'est-à-dire une ville tout à fait moderne. The people share the universal inability to imagine the possibility of catastrophes, such as the plague. Inevitably we are led to feel the element of deliberate effort in the doctor's attempts to share the feelings of the inhabitants of Oran. The word *voulu* stands out in the following: 'il a pris délibérément le parti de la victime et a voulu rejoindre les hommes, ses concitoyens, dans les seules certitudes qu'ils aient en commun, et qui sont l'amour, la souffrance et l'exil.'

But in finding *La Peste* a handbook suitable rather for the political leader or any kind of leader who sees clearer than the majority, we are driven back on the quality of the leader's vision and to the statements put into the mouths of the leading characters. When we ask what M. Camus offers besides the spontaneous morality, the willingness to act on behalf of others and to endure suffering open-eyed, the vague but cheering gestures towards *le bonheur*, the belief in the predominant goodness of man, it is hard to reply. Perhaps *La Peste* is once again merely a *part* of M. Camus' experience? In suspecting that it represents all there is, so far, I may be permitted to refer to a leaflet announcing a collection of books under the general title 'Espoir' ('dirigée par Albert Camus'). Here are a few extracts: 'Nous sommes dans le nihilisme. Peut-on sortir du nihilisme?' 'C'est la question qu'on nous inflige. Mais nous n'en sortirons pas en faisant mine d'ignorer le mal de l'époque ou en décidant de le nier. Le seul espoir est de le nommer au contraire et d'en faire l'inventaire pour trouver la guérison au bout de la maladie. Reconnaissons donc que c'est le temps de l'espoir, même s'il agit d'un espoir difficile.'

H. A. MASON

HUGO—ALL THE BEST

MODERN FRENCH LITERATURE, 1870-1940, by Denis Saurat
(Dent, 12/6)

Professor Saurat's introduction is entitled 'Inside Conditions' and 'Inner Development', but its real theme is 'Mallarmé may be Proust's father, but Zola is Proust's mother, and perhaps this applies to the whole period'. This curious statement is elaborated in a series of unrelated portraits, none of which is sharply defined, for Professor Saurat does no more than compare, in the most general terms, one writer with another—or with several others—without ever coming to grips with any of them. A style which seems to be continually striving after the easy formula only serves to emphasize this crude approach. A few examples will suffice.

"André Chamson is a sort of home Malraux", "Ramuz might be called the Hémon of Switzerland", "Fernand Gregh is a virile counterpart of Madame de Noailles", "Gide comes out as the Chateaubriand of the twentieth century", Duhamel also is born out of Zola by Mallarmé, and Céline and Malraux", Montherlant is the Rimbaud of the novel of the 1920's, he is to Proust what Rimbaud had been to Mallarmé", "Anatole France, Barrès nineteenth century in colour a blend of Hugo and Stendhal".

When Professor Saurat does attempt more detailed analysis, the result is this:

'Here is a true synthesis of Barrès "le Jardin de Bérénice" is "sur l'Oronte", but also the knight is obviously a "Déraciné" who should have stayed on "la Colline inspirée", or perhaps managed to bring back his eastern lady to Lorraine. Worse things have happened. Thus Barrès ends on an ironical note and we are the richer for it'.

Professor Saurat is even less successful when he covers an extensive field and deals with a group of writers. The chapter 'Literary Critics' illustrates his black and white approach to literature. Sainte-Beuve is dismissed in two sentences as a 'bad literary critic' because he was 'always wrong' in his decisions about his contemporaries. Sainte-Beuve had faults and, as everyone knows, his judgments about his contemporaries—many of whom were mediocre and didn't deserve the attention he gave them—were less reliable than those on his predecessors. But Professor Saurat omits all mention of Sainte-Beuve's positive achievements as a critic and gives no valid reasons for his pronouncement. He is clearly speaking from a prejudice. Hugo is behind this particular one, as he is behind most of the others.

After dismissing Brunetière, Faguet, Lemaître and Rémy de Gourmont (who was intelligent but a 'failure', Professor Saurat

then turns to Péguy who, because he wrote an excellent book on Hugo 'Victor-Marie, Comte Hugo', is 'a model to critics' and is 'intellectually much higher than Brunetière and Rémy de Gourmont or any of the others' He is, in fact, 'the best critic of the Third Republic'

If these statements were derived from a serious study of the critic in relation to his age and the literary tradition, and led on to a revaluation of French criticism—a field in which, at least until 1939, the French have tended to be conservative and unadventurous—they might be of some value As they stand, they are irrelevant and misleading

It would, however, be unfair to suggest that Professor Saurat does not take himself seriously He is admittedly insensitive to the literature of this period, and especially to its poetry, but he has two standards—all the more insidious because never clearly stated—by which he judges every writer Péguy conforms to both of them he admires Hugo and he is an 'honest man' These two criteria are really one and the same because, in Professor Saurat's view, you cannot be an honest man and not admire Hugo Their application leads him to the following conclusions

Rimbaud, although a portent, and doubtless a bad one, is turned into the first of Hugo's many children 'his maternal origin is only Victor Hugo, in Rimbaud's brain a fusion of Baudelaire and Hugo took place', and he wrote 134 immortal lines most of which 'could have been written by Victor Hugo' They were not of course, but that doesn't seem to matter This count of immortal lines does not include anything from the *Illuminations* or from the *Saison en Enfer* In short, Professor Saurat does not see Rimbaud's individual greatness nor his significance in the development of French poetry—which perhaps explains why the 'poète maudit' is not entirely damned Corbière on the other hand is, no doubt because his reply to 'Océano Nox' was a better poem than Hugo's, and he, with Lautréamont and Laforgue, is classed as a poet who does not 'really count' Mallarmé had many shortcomings, the chief being that his conception of poetry was new, and totally different from that of Hugo He preferred, we are told, 'silence to thunder', with the result 'out goes Hugo' No condemnation can therefore be too severe and we learn that Mallarmé's great handicap is that he cannot write either in prose or in poetry' His poems are 'mostly bad', and Professor Saurat calculates that, at a generous estimate, only some thirty lines in all are 'genuinely immortal'

He applies the same standards to the theatre and discovers that Edmond Rostand—in his view more important than Claudel and Giraudoux—is the 'last of the great dramatists' Cyrano de Bergerac is really 'Victor Hugo's Don César de Bazan' who 'wishing to become the central character of a play makes Rostand write the play' The other plays *L'Aiglon* and *Chantecler* are failures but they are 'great failures' It is salutary to compare this opinion about Rostand with that of a young contemporary French

critic who, although not great, is at least sensitive and intelligent and does not suffer from 'Hugolâtrie' *Cyrano de Bergerac, l'Aiglon, Chantecler* sont des modèles achevés de fausse poésie, de faux lyrisme et de fausse grandeur la langue et le vers français y sont bafoués avec insolence par un écrivain au-dessous du néant On rougit à l'idée que ces pièces ont passé et passent encore pour des chefs-d'œuvre aux yeux du peuple qui se prétend le plus spirituel de la terre'

In the chapters on the novel, the established classics—Zola, Loti, Anatole France, Barrès, Duhamel—are treated with indiscriminate reverence while Romain Rolland is shown to be a writer of the nineteenth century close to 'the spirit of Hugo' He even transcends with his book on Péguy (who, remember, wrote a book on Hugo) the 'best critic of the Third Republic' So he is acclaimed one of the three greatest novelists since Proust—the others being Barrès and Anatole France Proust, however, is not a 'normal human being' and clearly not an honest man, hence 'let no one attempt to imitate Proust'

Professor Saurat, who states that 'Poetry is by its very essence a failure', becomes progressively more unreliable as he approaches the poetry of our time Here, apart from his chapters on Valéry and Supervielle, it is clear that he has read little and is not well-informed With Valéry, he can still refer back with some effect to one of his standards, 'In a better period, in one that had a more constructive spirit Valéry could have been another Hugo' His 'song' is 'thinner as well as less fantastic (sic) than Hugo's' but none the less he is the greatest poet since Hugo With Supervielle, he can refer to his other standard, honesty, for Supervielle is 'a normal human being'

The chapter on Supervielle will be useful if it draws attention to a poet who is comparatively little known in this country Professor Saurat stresses the obvious aspect of Supervielle's work, the 'strength and confidence', qualities which, it is important to note, are found mostly in poems about animals and children where Supervielle can forget the complexities of mature experience and recapture moments of a lost innocence He does not see, however, the other and more significant aspect of Supervielle, the expression in delicate and subtle poetry of his failure to find any remedy for man's isolation and distress in the contemporary world Supervielle's friend, Henri Michaux, has explored more deeply not only the implications of our present predicament but also the possibilities of 'exorcising' it through poetry, and his 'Plume' is a figure as representative of this age as 'le Dandy' was of Baudelaire's Michaux, who published his first work in 1922, is now one of the most important—and certainly the most original—of the contemporary French poets Yet Professor Saurat refers to him only once in the meaningless phrase 'his name is enough' As might be expected, Professor Saurat prefers the obvious Aragon, the patriotic

¹Kléber Haedans 'Une Histoire de la Littérature Française (p. 424)

poet of 1942, to the surrealist, and better, Aragon of 'le Paysan de Paris', and he prefers him to Eluard. Of Eluard, whom he does not understand, he speaks with some contempt, and quotes as if it were a complete poem—to which he has added his own punctuation—what is in fact only the beginning of 'Sans Age'. Fargue and Jouve are likewise dismissed with contempt, and there is no mention of Reverdy (who is essential to an understanding of Eluard), St John Perse, Max Jacob, and nothing at all about the younger poets.

The Bibliography is interesting as an indication of Professor Saurat's approach to literature and of his equipment. Three of the eight books listed are by Professor Saurat. The rest can be useful for reference if the reader knows that 'Academic criticism in the best sense' means potted comments in the form of a literary digest. Professor Saurat characteristically finds it necessary to qualify his recommendation of Thibaudet's book which, although occasionally superficial, shows a grasp of literary tradition since the Revolution, and is stimulating and well written. It is significant that, like his own book, none of those mentioned contains an informed and balanced appreciation of Surréalisme which, although dead as a movement, is still pervasive as an influence, and must be taken into account if we are to understand contemporary French poetry.

No bibliography of this period would be complete which did not include the following books

Imitation A La Litterature Francaise D'aujourd'hui Émile
Bouvier (La Renaissance du Livre, 1928)

Inquietude et Reconstruction Benjamin Crémieux (Corréa,
1931)

De Baudelaire au Surrealisme Marcel Raymond (Corti,
1933)

Les Fleurs de Tarbes Jean Paulhan (Gallimard, 1941)

Faux Pas Maurice Blanchot (Gallimard, 1943)

Histoire du Surréalisme Maurice Nadeau (Ed du Seuil, 1945)

Axel's Castle Edmund Wilson (Scribners, 1931)

It is a pity that Professor Saurat's book, which he no doubt intended as a serious study, should add to little to our knowledge or to our appreciation of a period about which so much yet remains to be discovered.

C. A. HACKETT.

INTERPRETER OR ORACLE?

THE CROWN OF LIFE ESSAYS IN INTERPRETATION OF SHAKESPEARE'S FINAL PLAYS, by G. Wilson Knight
(Geoffrey Cumberlege, Oxford University Press, 18/-)

In this book Mr. Wilson Knight has returned to the interpretation of Shakespeare. After *Principles of Shakespearean Production* he ranged widely over the rest of English literature in *The Burning Oracle* and *The Starlit Dome*. Later his rôle as apocalyptic prophet was extended on patriotic lines and we were given the Messages of Shakespeare and Milton for democracy at war. More recently even the pretence of critical control has been abandoned and the literary texts have been treated simply as material from which to extract the prophetic wisdom. In *Hiroshima* this is almost admitted in so many words. The cloudy verbosity of these later works may be left to fade into oblivion as soon as possible, but *The Crown of Life* seems to be offered as criticism, and it is a sad example of the deterioration brought about by bad habits persistently indulged—sad, because there is also sufficient genuine insight to remind us that Mr. Knight also wrote *The Wheel of Fire*.

Not that even *The Wheel of Fire* was free from disquieting signs that its author's mind was functioning under an altogether inadequate critical discipline. Nor are they lacking in the even earlier essay *Myth and Miracle* (1929), now reprinted as the first chapter of this book. It contains a brief statement of the principles later expressed more adequately in the introductory essay on Shakespeare Interpretation in *The Wheel of Fire*, and an outline of the significance of the last plays as a group. But there are already a number of wide gestures in the direction of Tolstoy, Goethe, Dostoevsky and Keats, and such comments as this:

'It need not be a progress stretched across a span of years in Shakespeare I have traced an exact miniature of the succession of great plays to follow in the thought-sequence of one speech in *Richard II*, and the same sequence is separately apparent in some of Tennyson's early poems.'

The main objection to Mr. Wilson Knight's methods of interpretation is precisely that whatever there may be in common between the thought-sequences of *Richard II*, the mature plays and early Tennyson, it is clearly not experience concretely realized in verse. For the most elementary sensibility to language and its uses it is the *difference* between these works that counts—the obvious conclusion being that Mr. Knight is not concerned with particular realization at all, only with quite superficial resemblances of sense,

subject-matter or 'symbolism' (using the word to mean a straightforward mechanical correspondence)

This lack of critical discipline often shows itself as a downright insensitiveness to style, and nowhere more clearly than in discussion of passages of doubtful authenticity. One sympathizes with his reluctance to follow Robertson and the editors in blaming the Interpolator for every passage they dislike, but elaborate defences of the Hecate scenes in *Macbeth* and the earlier parts of *Pericles* are simply the opposite extreme. Differences of rhythm and movement seem to weigh far less with Mr. Knight than resemblances of imagery or 'symbolism'. It may be arguable that there are Shakespearian phrases in the first two acts of *Pericles*, but he shows an altogether inadequate appreciation of the world of difference in movement between, say, the shipwrecked *Pericles'* lines at the beginning of Act II and the great storm-speech which opens Act III. Indeed, he says of the former, 'The accent is clearly Shakespearian'. For the vision in *Cymbeline* he makes out a tolerable case, though, Shakespeare's or not, I doubt whether it will bear the weight of significance which his interpretation gives to it. But the most astonishing of all is the claim for the complete authenticity of *Henry VIII*. Anxious to fit the play in as the final goal of the Shakespearian progress, the culmination of the design, he is driven to explain away the limp 'Fletcherian' verse: thus, we are told, is a new mode evolved by Shakespeare specially for the expression of religious conversion and analogous experiences! He seems to think that the case against the greater part of the play rests chiefly on pseudo-scientific 'verse tests', but anyone who can believe that Cranmer's last speech is by the poet who about the same time was writing *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest* will believe anything. Perhaps it is significant that throughout the book there isn't a single reference to *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, a professed collaboration between Shakespeare and Fletcher in which the obviously Shakespearian passages are as unlike the 'Fletcherian' parts of *Henry VIII* as possible: for example, compare the following

she shall be—

But few now living can behold that goodness—
 A pattern to all princes living with her,
 And all that shall succeed: Saba was never
 More covetous of wisdom and fair virtue
 Than this pure soul shall be: all princely graces,
 That mould up such a mighty piece as this is,
 With all the virtues that attend the good,
 Shall still be doubled on her, truth shall nurse her,
 Holy and heavenly thoughts still counsel her,
 She shall be lov'd and fear'd, her own shall bless her,
 Her foes shake like a field of beaten corn,
 And hang their heads with sorrow, good grows with her

(*Henry VIII*, V, v, 20-32)

The more proclaiming
 Our suit shall be neglected when her arms,
 Able to lock Jove from a synod, shall
 By warranting moonlight corslet thee, O, when
 Her twinning cherries shall their sweetness fall
 Upon thy tasteful lips, what wilt thou think
 Of rotten kings or blubber'd queens? what care
 For what thou feel'st not, what thou feel'st being able
 To make Mars spurn his drum? O, if thou couch
 But one night with her, every hour in't will
 Take hostage of thee for a hundred, and
 Thou shalt remember nothing more than what
 That banquet bids thee to!

(*The Two Noble Kinsmen*, I, 1, 175-186)

The different intention of the two passages is surely insufficient to account for such a complete difference of rhythm.¹ There are times when one is inclined to suspect that Mr Knight actually prefers the 'Fletcherian' type of verse that may seem unfair, yet what is one to say to the remark on Tennyson's dramas in *Hiroshima*?

'The blank verse, unlike Hardy's, is as dramatically forceful as Shakespeare's and Byron's, and to be rigidly distinguished from the simple falling rhythms of his narrative manner'

Elsewhere in this book he warns us against 'regarding tormented rhythms as a poetical goal' In general this may be sound, but only concrete examples could make it clear whether or not Mr Knight is merely echoing the conventional objections to Shakespeare's later style Certainly his appreciation of Posthumus's account of the battle in *Cymbeline* does rather less than justice to that fine piece of dramatic verse

There are other instances, too, of something surprisingly like a reversion to nineteenth-century attitudes Mr Knight seems at times unduly worried by anachronisms, occasionally parts of the scene-by-scene analysis are not far removed from Dowden ('But Buckingham, I think, fingers in his convulsive passion a cross worn on his breast, and it is this that accuses not only him, but all his predecessors in passion'), while parts of the panegyric

¹Part of the argument is that the verse of *Henry VIII* is above Fletcher's normal standard Mr Knight quotes a passage from *Bonduca* as a fine exception It seems to me typical, and not least in its unconscious echoing of Shakespeare, a point which he seems to have missed

Farewell all glorious wars, now thou art gone
 And honest arms adieu all noble battles
 Maintain'd in thirst of honour, not of blood
 Farewell for ever.

on Imogen would almost fit into an essay by Hazlitt

All the same, the book is not negligible, and those who felt that the best of Mr Knight's early work came nearer than most existing criticism to the full poetic experience of mature Shakespearian drama will find illuminating passages in all of these essays, except possibly that on *Henry VIII*. There, indeed, a tone of strained exaggeration suggests that most readers are unlikely to find the argument convincing there is 'nothing more remarkable in Shakespeare' than the 'three similar falling movements' of Buckingham, Wolsey and Katharine, 'never was Shakespeare's human insight more consummately used' than in the Old Lady's satirical comments on Anne Bullen's rejection of ambition, 'no words in Shakespeare' are 'so deeply loaded with a life's wisdom' as Cranmer's prophecy. The account of *Percles* deals effectively with the last three acts (it is the peculiarity of Mr Knight's analysis that it improves in direct ratio to the strength of his text) and brings out clearly the new interests which took possession of Shakespeare's mind in the late plays. "Great Creating Nature" an essay on *The Winter's Tale* is, I think, the best in the book. If it has not the economical force of Mr Traversi's essay it completes that account with a wealth of suggestive analysis, especially of the first two acts and the last scenes. The chapter on *Cymbeline* is less convincing as a whole the suggestions of nationalist and patriotic themes, with a careful distinction between classical Rome and Renaissance Italy, are interesting but they will hardly bear the emphasis laid on them, similarly Mr Knight seems to me to exaggerate the significance of the theme of royalty and the importance of the vision. But here again there are incidental passages of effective analysis. *The Tempest* offers obvious opportunities for the discovery of esoteric significance, and here accordingly we find references to the work of Colin Still and parallels with sixteenth-century Chinese fables and Nietzsche. Nevertheless there are valuable pages of comment more closely related to the text.

It is extremely unfortunate that the genuine insight and real originality of Mr Knight's best work on Shakespeare should be so inextricably interwoven with his prophetic rhapsodies as it is, one can see only too clearly why the academically conservative should believe in sticking to Bradley and Granville-Barker. The trouble is not merely that he is tactically an embarrassing ally and that with each new extravagance the daughters of the Philistines triumph, but also that his work cannot be recommended to the critically immature without the most careful warnings and elaborate reservations. The valuable part of his work has been and will continue to be influential, but he will probably have to be content for its influence to be largely unacknowledged and indirect.

R G Cox